DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 197 892 RC 012 482

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TITLE When the World Began: A Yukon Teacher's Guide to Comparative and Local Mythology.
INSTITUTION Yukon Dept. of Education, White Horse.
PUB DATE Aug 78
NOTE 47p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *American Indian Culture: *American Indian Literature: American Indians: *Canada Natives: Elementary Secondary Education: English Curriculum: *Instructional Materials: *Mythology: Resource Materials: Social Studies: Symbolism: Tribes: *Units of Study
IDENTIFIERS Athapascan (Tribe): Canada: *Yukon Territory

ABSTRACT

Written in three sections, this guide has two purposes: one is to assist English and Social Studies teachers who would like to encourage students to understand and appreciate mythology: to do this it provides a guide to Yukon mythology, following guidelines in the British Columbia programme of studies. The second purpose is to provide some comparative notes for particular Yukon myths in the book "My Stories Are My Wealth" by Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith, and Rachel Dawson, published by the Council for Yukon Indians. Although that book was not specifically prepared for use in schools, it may be a source-book for teachers interested in including Yukon materials when they discuss mythology. Part 1 of this guide is a discussion of themes in northern mythology, particularly Athapaskan mythology in the Yukon, which might be of some use to a teacher teaching mythology at an elementary or high school level. Part 2 is a more direct guide to ways in which Yukon mythology could be used in grades 1 to 7 Social Studies and grades 8 to 12 English. This section follows the British Columbia curriculum guides. Part 3 is a thematic and comparative guide to stories in "My Stories Are My Wealth" for teachers specifically interested in Yukon mythology. (Author/CM)

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When the World Began

By Julie Cruikshank

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A Yukon Teacher's Guide to Comparative and Local Mythology

Preface and Acknowledgements

This guide was prepared to assist English and Social Studies teachers who would like to encourage students to understand and appreciate mythology. More specifically, it was written to accompany a book of Yukon myths narrated by Mrs. Angela Sidney from Tagish, Mrs. Kitty Smith who grew up near Dalton Post but now lives in Whitehorse, and Mrs. Rachel Dawson who was born at Fort Selkirk but lived much of her life in Whitehorse. Their book **My Stories Are My Wealth** was published by the Council for Yukon Indians in 1977 and is available to Yukon schools. Some teachers have suggested that a guide should be prepared to clarify ways in which myth could be used in classrooms. Comparative mythology is presently part of the grade 8 and grade 10 English curriculum and this guide draws on some of the themes already taught at those levels.

The background to **My Stories Are My Wealth** is described in its introduction, but a few points should be repeated here. From 1974 to 1976, I worked with several older Yukon women recording personal and family history for their children and grandchildren. Our objective was to produce individual booklets for each woman's family. As we continued, the women stressed the importance of recording stories from 'long ago', from myth time, when animals and men could communicate directly. They insisted that, in any event, collective mythical history was more important than their own personal history, but that they did not really distinguish between personal and collective history. As one woman explained, "I have no money to leave to my family, but my stories are my wealth."

The point is simply that, in the Yukon, oral mythology is still a living mythology, not something relegated to library volumes as it is in so much of the world. A teacher who wants to consider mythology seriously in the classroom should be aware that many students will be able to go for instruction to grandparents and parents, that some older Indian people may be willing to talk to classes about stories, and that oral mythology is much more alive than any written version can be.

Mrs. Angela Sidney, Mrs. Kitty Smith and Mrs. Rachel Dawson were patient and tireless teachers. They deserve thanks from everyone who reads and learns from their book and their stories. It was important to them that children learn the stories and enjoy them enough to go directly to their own parents and grandparents for instruction.

I particularly thank Mr. Leon Logie for his encouragement in the preparation of this guide, for helping me to set these themes in a broader context and for his suggestions about how these themes could be used at a high school English level. Collyne Bunn encouraged me to extend this booklet to include suggestions for social studies teachers teaching at elementary classes and made many suggestions herself.

I hope that this guide may encourage some teachers and students to discover more about mythology in their own communities.

J.C.
August, 1978

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INTRODUCTION

Rediscovering Myth

On a winter day in 1619, a young scholar named René Descartes experienced a mystical vision in which it was overwhelmingly revealed that the nature of the universe was fundamentally mathematical and logical. So profound was his revelation that he followed an age-old custom and made a pilgrimage to Italy to thank a Roman Catholic saint for the experience.

Ironically, after coming to terms with his own vision, he dismissed the humanities as having nothing to teach, rejected emotions as 'irrational intrusions', denounced imagination as a source of delusions and directed his own writings toward the enshrinement of reason.[1]

Descartes went on to write classical works describing rational, deductive logic as the source of all knowledge. His writings became part of the foundation of what has become known as the Western intellectual tradition.

While Cartesian thought has subsequently dominated western education, there have always been philosophers who have questioned its value as a sole explanation of man and the universe. They have argued that it is equally important to discover the non-rational in man — the intuitive insight, the creative force, the unpredictable components which continue to thwart efforts to develop social sciences as precise as physical sciences. Writers like the Italian philosopher Giambatista Vico, the German pessimist Arthur Schopenhauer, the Viennese psychologist Sigmund Freud, the French philosopher Henri Bergsen, and a host of their followers have argued that there are two distinct kinds of knowledge — a knowledge of the conscious, external, man-made world of everyday life and a fundamentally different kind of knowledge of the unconscious, internal workings of the human mind. It is this subconscious, intuitive kind of knowledge that mythology tries to explore or explain. Mythological themes have persisted throughout human history.

This is by no means merely philosophical debate. Scientists have documented in considerable detail the specialized functions in the human brain. The left hemisphere of the cerebral cortex governs rational, analytical thought, particularly such activities as reading, writing, speaking and arithmetic. The right hemisphere is the centre of intuitive, imaginative, creative thinking, particularly manifested by abilities in music, art, pattern recognition, holistic reasoning, in dreams and, one might suggest, in myth.[2] *But in western society, we have emphasized those skills seated in the 'left brain' and transmit them in our educational system, often at the expense of other modes of thinking.*

The rediscovery of the importance of myth in this century has led to a fundamental re-evaluation of ourselves as human beings and of our categories of knowledge. Writers like James Frazer, Emile Durkheim, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Claude Levi-Strauss, Ernst Cassirer, Northrop Frye, Mircea Eliade, Joseph Campbell have shown that the common degeneration of the term 'myth' to mean 'fiction' or 'invention' is a gross oversimplification. Myth, as these writers use the term, means 'universal truth', a sacred tradition, an exemplary model. While their approaches to the study of myth differ, they might all agree that the reduction of myth to 'falsehood' could only occur in an age in which individuals do not acknowledge the valid role played by the psyche.

In the study of comparative mythology, 'myth' means a 'universal truth', a sacred tradition or an exemplary model.

Myths contribute to our understanding of the history of creativity. Creative or intuitive ideas certainly must submit to rational, critical examination, but, in the words of one scientist, "mere critical thinking without creative and intuitive insights, without the search for new patterns, is sterile and doomed."[3]

No one categorical definition is possible for myth, no one absolute standard against which all examples can be measured. Myths have different shapes and functions in different cultures. At the most general level, myth may be defined simply as a traditional story.[4] *However, many of the myths described in this booklet come close to a suggestion by French anthropologist Levi-Strauss that myth is essentially an attempt to solve a problem, a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction. Such myths, he says, grapple with some of the most fundamental psychological and social problems faced by any society. This may become a clearer working definition in the sections which follow.*

Bruno Bettleheim has talked about the psychological necessity for children to experience fantasy. He argues with currently popular psychological theories which maintain that children should not be exposed to violence in fairy tales but, rather, to 'good fiction'. By withholding or ignoring fairy tales, he says, adults are

depriving children of an important experience. If children experience psychological conflict in fantasy, they are better prepared for it intuitively when they meet it in real life. If children do not experience conflict ritually, they have no model for resolving conflict later and are forced to do it on their own, without guidance.[5] This argument is equally true of myth. Myth is a universally true reflection of some of the central social and psychological conflicts faced by all people at all times.

Myth has been defined as an attempt to solve a problem, a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction, a reflection of social and psychological conflicts faced by all people at all times.

It is partly as a result of this renewed interest that mythology is becoming part of the present curriculum for school study. However, the teaching of myth in classrooms does present difficulties. Because of our inherited belief that only rational, empirical explanations are correct, myths are often interpreted as moralistic fables. This approach is a natural outgrowth of educational methods which rely on giving the child an experience of the so-called real world of everyday life. Such a didactic approach often discourages students from any real appreciation or enjoyment of mythology.

At the same time, myths should not be treated just as fanciful stories because they do reflect fundamental truths about the societies from which they come. The distinction between myth and history seems quite arbitrary if we accept the idea that what people have thought is as important as what people have done.

Myths are distorted in another way when they are treated as factual history. A literal interpretation of "The Girl Who Married the Bear", for example, is absurd and it misses the fundamental symbolism of the story.

There is also a tendency, even when treating myth seriously, to consider it simply an aspect of the past. Mythology is not just about the past or about transmitting values of the past. In fact, an understanding of contemporary literature, modern social and political structures and individual psychology really depends on at least a passing acquaintance with themes in mythology.

One further difficulty with studying mythology in schools in the present day is that stories which originated as sacred narratives are often edited or bowdlerized to fit adult ideas of what children should consume. Inevitably, some of their fundamental meaning is lost when this is done.[6] Teachers in Yukon communities have a distinct advantage because traditional oral mythology is still very much a part of the heritage of older people. Some teachers have invited older Indian residents from their community to talk to their classes. Stories told by people who understand all the nuances have considerably more impact for children than do stories which are simply read out of context. The Indian Resource Centre at the Yukon Indian Centre, 22 Nisutlin Drive, the Yukon Archives and the audio-visual centre in the Department of Education can also provide assistance to teachers looking for more materials on Yukon Indian mythology.

This booklet has two purposes. One is to provide a guide to local mythology, following guidelines set out in the regular British Columbia programme of studies; the second is to provide some comparative notes for particular stories in the book **My Stories Are My Wealth** by Mrs. Angela Sidney, Mrs. Kitty Smith and Mrs. Rachel Dawson, published by the Council for Yukon Indians. While that book was not specifically prepared for use in schools, it may be a source-book for teachers interested in including Yukon materials when they are discussing mythology.

This guide is written in three sections:

PART I is a discussion of themes in northern mythology, particularly Athapaskan mythology in the Yukon, which might be of some use to a teacher teaching mythology at an elementary or high school level.

PART 2 is a more direct guide to ways in which Yukon mythology could be used in grades 1 to 7 social studies and grades 8 to 12 English. (This section follows the B.C. curriculum guides.)

PART 3 is a thematic and comparative guide to stories in **My Stories Are My Wealth** for teachers specifically interested in Yukon mythology.

References — Introduction

[1]J. Bronowski and Bruce M. Mazlish, **The Western Intellectual Tradition,** New York: Harper and Row, 1960, pp. 217-8.

[2]Carl Sagan, **The Dragons of Eden: Speculations on the Evolution of Human Intelligence,** New York: Ballantine Books, 1977.

[3]Ibid., pp. 190-1.

[4]For a discussion of definitions and theories of myth in various cultures, see G. S. Kirk, **Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures,** Cambridge University Press, 1970.

[5]Bruno Bettleheim, **The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales,** Vintage Books, 1977.

[6]Elli Kongas Maranda, "B.C. Indian Myth and Education: A Review Article", **B.C. Studies,** No. 25, Spring, 1975, pp. 125-134.

1 Themes in Northern Indian Mythology

In the Beginning:

> *"The comparative study of the mythologies of the world compels us to view the cultural history of mankind as a unit; for we find that such themes as the fire-theft, deluge, land of the dead, virgin birth and resurrected hero have widespread distribution — appearing everywhere in new combinations while remaining, like the elements of a kaleidoscope, only a few and always the same."*[1]

Origin of the Earth:

> *"Once there was no earth. Water was where the earth is now. The earth was very deep under the water. Beaver and muskrat, and all the animals and birds, dived but none of them reached the bottom. None of them stayed under water longer than half a day. At last Diver (a bird) went down; after six days he came up quite exhausted and speechless. His friends examined his toenails and found mud or earth under them. From this, they formed on top of the water a new earth, which grew until it formed the present earth. At first, it was merely mud and very soft; later it became firm, and trees and vegetation began to grow on it. Now the earth is old and dry. Perhaps it is drying up."*[2]

Throughout the world we find accounts of creation which describe the origin of the world, the Flood, how man obtained fire, and how he obtained fresh water.

In the mythology of Yukon Indians, genesis begins as it does in countless other cultures with a world covered by water. Various animals propose to dive for earth and one is finally successful. In the version above, told by Albert Dease at Dease Lake, British Columbia, in 1915, Diver is the bringer of earth. In a Kutchin version from the northern Yukon, it is Beaver who is successful.[3] In Mrs. Angela Sidney's version, Seal is the one who returns with sand.[4] In a coastal Tlingit version, it is Muskrat who struggles back with earth.[5] In eastern Canada, in Huron and Iroquois mythology, Toad brought back mud in his mouth.[6] This story of diving for soil has been described as one of the most ancient foundations of myth, known in parts of Asia and Polynesia as well as North America.[7]

The Rumanian mythologist, Mircea Eliade, has defined *all* myth as an account of creation which relates how something was produced or how some aspect of the present reality came into being. It also reveals ideal models for all significant human activities — eating, marriage, work, recreation, education, or art. In a society where myth is still a living tradition, he would argue, a man or woman re-enacts an event performed in mythical time with every secular activity.[8]

Another universal myth is that of the Flood which we know from the Judeo-Christian tradition. Deluge stories occur in every part of the world. In the Yukon:

> *"Once there came a great flood which covered the earth. Most of the people made rafts, and some escaped in canoes. Great darkness came on, and high winds which drove the vessels hither and thither. The people became separated. Some were driven far away. When the flood subsided, people landed wherever they found the nearest land. When the earth became dry, they lived in the places near where they had landed. People were now widely scattered over the world. They did not know where other people lived, and probably thought themselves the only survivors. Long afterwards, when in their wanderings they met people from another place, they spoke different languages and could not understand one another. This is why there are now many different centres of population, many tribes, and many languages. Before the flood, there was but one centre, for all the people lived together in one country and spoke one language."*[9]

The man who recorded this version at Dease Lake in 1915 listed 32 other North American Indian tribes where a similar version had been recorded by that year; many more have been written down since then. Older people throughout the southern Yukon can point out the mountains where remains of those rafts have been seen. But the Flood they talk of was not caused by a vengeful God, as in the Judeo-Christian tradition. A Tlingit version tells us that Raven put a woman in charge of the tides. One time he wanted to go under the ocean so he had this woman raise the waters, but the waters climbed to the tops of mountains. People had time to load

canoes and rafts, but many did not survive the cold which followed.[10]

All mythologies describe beliefs about how mankind obtained fire. In Greek myth, a Titan named Prometheus stole fire from the gods and brought it to human beings. This theme occurs throughout North America and in two Yukon myths. In one version, Crow arranged to have Chickenhawk steal fire for mankind[11], but in another well-known version Fox staged a relay, stole flint from Bear and then had animals carry it one by one until Bear tired and gave up. It is, in fact, a Yukon Indian version of this legend which is quoted at length in Joseph Campbell's four-volume study of world mythology.[12] Again, variations of this same story are told of Coyote in the American southwest, of Rabbit in Georgia and Alabama, and of Raven in the Chilcotin.

Another widespread theme concerns the origin of fresh water. In Tlingit, Athapaskan and Inuit legends, Crow or Raven stole water from another bird (petrel, eagle or loon) and tried to escape with it through a smoke hole in the roof; the offended host called on his smoke hole spirits to trap Crow, then smoked him until Crow turned his present black colour.

Parallels between Yukon myths and North American myths and between North American myths and world mythologies continue and become far more complex than these few episodes suggest. A bewildering number of animate and inanimate characters come to life and their adventures are described in detail by narrators who learned the stories in childhood. A contemporary listener can only marvel that any one story teller can remember so much detail. Yet, as more and more stories are told, the detail can be seen as a code, a "language" describing complicated ideas about the world in a symbolic form which must be understood and learned by members of the community, particularly by the young people.

Approaches to the Study of Comparative Mythology

The study of comparative mythology developed unevenly from an interest in the wealth of material from classical Greece. From there, students began to examine Hebrew mythology in a comparative context; however, there was considerable opposition to any such interpretation of the Bible because Judeo-Christian teachers took the unique position that their Bible, their mythology, was absolute, historical truth. Interest then expanded to include Egyptian and Mesopotamian mythology where ultimate authority rested in a priest king whose divinity was supported by myth.

Anthropologists have recorded myths in societies which relied either on hunting and fishing or on planting and agriculture for subsistence. There, mythologies helped individuals work out a relationship with the environment and with the animals and the human beings who shared that environment. Recent advances in archeology have broadened the historical base even further.

Ultimately, we must conclude that no local mythology is any truer than any other, but all are equally valid ways of understanding the universe. Despite infinite variations in structure and complexity, all myths enable their followers to participate in some universal, central idea of truth.

In his series of books on comparative mythology, Joseph Campbell suggests that significant differences in myth have appeared at different stages of history. In hunting and gathering societies throughout the world, local customs have always been interpreted as having superhuman origin, as though sacred ancestors started the traditions. In eastern Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations, the social order was interpreted as part of the natural order, but both orders were, in turn, part of an absolute, implacable cosmic law. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the moral order was set out by a Creator who was either 'out' or 'up there'. The Greeks, Romans and later the Germans were the first to recognize that laws are secular; they are made by men, not given to them. In twentieth century western society, a rational scientific tradition has become our governing myth, setting the absolute standard against which truth is judged.

From the time that scholars began to examine and study mythology rather than simply experience and live myth, they have asked: Where do myths come from? How do myths develop? No one explanation can fit all mythologies, but students have generally approached myth from two very different directions. These two approaches reflect the conscious/unconscious, mind/body dualism which is so much a part of the western tradition.

On one hand, there are those who explain myth as a response to locally conditioned interests, an attempt to explain local imponderables. For them, climate, history, landscape, social conditions and other material circumstances are the primary forces shaping man's ideals, fantasies and emotions. This approach dominates much of American cultural anthropology.

On the other hand, there are those who maintain that the human mind or psyche, like the human body, has a structure and a way of functioning which has been developing

The Prometheus myth is retold in **Comparative Mythology** *(Marion Ralston), a grade 10 English text.*

throughout several hundred thousand years of human development and that it is completely arrogant to assume that we have 'passed beyond' it in the last few thousand years. They would argue that, just as we have genetic continuity with our ancestors in our physical make-up, so have we inherited universal symbols (which Carl Jung calls archetypes). According to this second argument, universal psychological dilemmas are re-enacted in myths and dreams.

Anyone interested in the two perspectives can see them discussed at length in Joseph Campbell's **Primitive Mythology**. If myth is to be considered part of world history, he says, neither explanation is sufficient yet both are necessary. We need to discover what is universal in human nature and what is part of local sociology. Campbell, who is obviously greatly influenced by Carl Jung, suggests that *myth* is a psychological phenomenon but that *mythical imagery* must be understood as a reflection of local conditions.[13] Particular images and events and behaviour in myth have to make sense to local people before they can become an acceptable part of local mythology. In other words, while similar messages may be repeated over and over in various parts of the world and in all periods of history, the particular symbols or codes in which they are conveyed become a kind of local literature.

women in these stories are not behaving randomly but are subject to the same psychological influences as all mankind; this becomes evident especially when the same stories appear over and over again in the course of human history.

Seen in this way, mythology has a dual aim. First, it takes the individual temporarily out of the historical context in which he or she lives every day. It guides that person through a psychological or spiritual journey which, though unfamiliar, is nevertheless phrased in familiar symbols or images. Secondly, it reunites him with the historical and local culture in which he will undoubtedly have to spend the rest of his life as a fully-functioning social being.

> *"The distinctive challenge of mythology lies in its power to affect this dual end, and not to recognize this fact is to miss the whole point and mystery of our science."*[16]

At the risk of oversimplifying some fairly complex arguments, comparative understanding of myth must consider both historical (external, local, material) and psychological explanations, and likewise any really compelling myth will instruct not only how one should relate to the outside world but also how one should relate to one's own inner psychological development.

The mythology of hunters anywhere in the world tends to stress the importance of individual quests. The mythology of planters tends to stress the group, the community.

Myth as a Guide

Myths have different functions in different societies. At the most obvious level, they usually instruct:

> *"Until recently, the southern Yukon Indians learned all that they knew about the world either from their own experience or from the oral instruction of their elders. The older people constantly told stories about happenings in the 'long time ago' of myth time when animals not only acted but looked like humans .... indeed, the oldest and ranking men in every living group had a fairly formalized responsibility for handling the most important knowledge."*[14]

Myths have a less obvious but equally important psychological function. At this level, they represent the outward dramatization of internal conflicts experienced in every generation. When the Yukon Indian man goes to live with Groundhog[15], he is not living in a groundhog den but working out the various options he might have in life and weighing them against his social responsibilities to his own family. All appearances aside, the animals and men and

North American Myths: Hunters and Planters

There are two contrasting types of mythology on this continent, depending on whether tribes are primarily hunters and fishermen, or planters and agriculturalists. The mythology of hunters anywhere in the world tends to stress the importance of individual quests. The mythology of planters tends to stress the group, the community.

In hunting tribes, a shaman was the individual man or woman who reached the highest spiritual level in his or her society as a result of a personal psychological crisis. While the extended family group is extremely important in hunting societies, individual prowess and personal knowledge are stressed, particularly for men who are responsible for most of the hunting.

Before writing changed the way knowledge is transmitted, hunters lived in an elaborate symbolic universe where all physical objects and social customs had specific associations which were passed on from generation to generation. For example:

"For all Yukon Natives, an incontrovertible fact of the universe is that it is full of power. Power is both ordinary and more than ordinary; and a major problem which faces all Indians is how to live with its various manifestations since most humans have only slight control over power."[17]

The myths helped the individual to come to terms with those forces, both in the universe and in himself.

Planters, on the other hand, (the Pueblo, Hopi or Zuni, for example) emphasize community ceremonials and follow a ceremonial calendar. Unlike the shamans, their priests are socially initiated, taught by those in whom the group's collective spiritual knowledge is invested. The emphasis is always on the group, and on initiating the individual into the concerns of the group.

The neolithic revolution, which changed man from hunter to planter, has been called the most significant revolution in human history. In the Near East, grain growing first appeared between 7500 and 4500 B.C., spreading eastward and westward and reaching the Pacific and Atlantic in approximately 2500 B.C. In North America, the dates are later, the earliest known agriculture dating from somewhere between 1500 and 500 B.C.[18]

Although the neolithic revolution freed more time for specialization and ritual, this alone cannot account for the tremendous amount of time devoted to ritual activity in many of these societies, like Mesopotamia and Egypt.

'The Maize Spirit' is the best known North American agricultural myth, partly because it became the inspiration for Longfellow's "The Song of Hiawatha". As in many early agricultural myths, the theme traces the cycle of death and burial of a divine being and the subsequent growth of plants — in this case maize — from his grave. It is retold in **The Book of Myths**, a grade 10 English text in Yukon schools.[19]

The distinctions between hunting and planting societies could be explored at greater length, but this framework at least sets the mythology of Yukon hunters in a global context.

While, from one perspective, the myth and ritual of planters seems to be more complex and more highly developed than that of hunters, Campbell notes that:

"...there have been depths of insight reached by the mind in the solitude of the tundras that are hardly to be matched in the great group ecstasies..."[20]

It is this that we should keep in mind when we approach northern Athapaskan myths.

Some Themes in Yukon Mythology

Three common themes in North American myths also appear in Yukon myths:

A: The relationship of men and animals who prepared the present world;

B: Hero tales;

C: Trickster tales.

Sometimes they are woven into cycles; other times they are told as independent stories. Some of the general themes can be illustrated with Yukon examples.

A: Animals and Men

All North American Indian mythologies begin with an account of how the world came to be. In some cases the world had to be transformed to make it suitable for people; in others, people had to be transformed to make them suitable to live in the world. In both kinds of beginnings, the fundamental issue is establishing harmony between man and the environment, and accounts are full of struggles which took place in 'myth time' when the world was taking shape.[21]

North American Indian mythologies all begin with an account of world beginnings. Some stories tell how the world had to be 'cleaned-up' for people. Others tell how people had to be changed to make them suitable to live in the world. In both kinds of accounts, myth addresses the uneasy balance between culture and nature, man and environment.

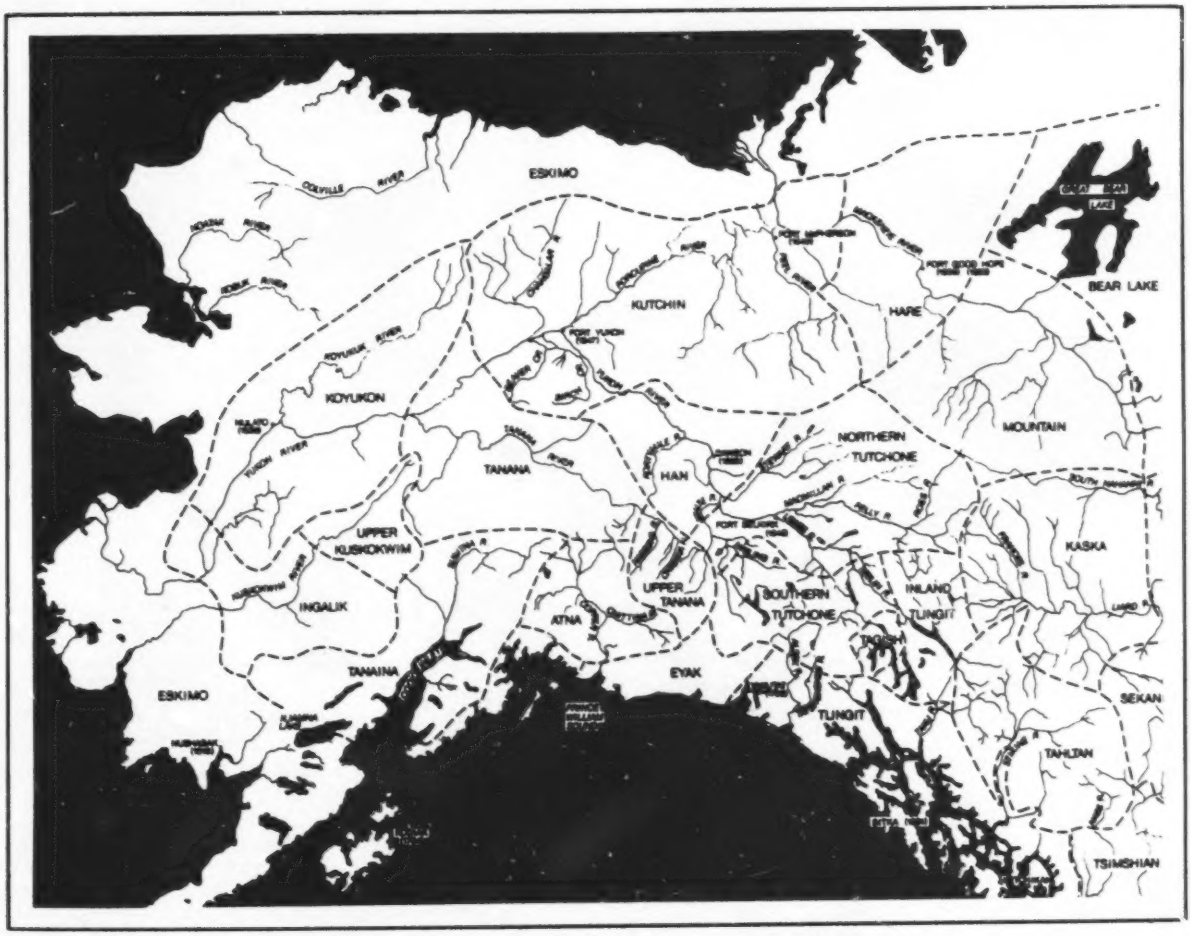
The great philosophical and psychological task in any hunting culture has been to come to terms with sharing the wilderness with other, non-human beings.

Animals are both alien to man and necessary for man's survival. Animals are a source of dangerous spiritual power, on one hand, and a source of food and clothing on the other hand.

In the Yukon, there is considerable preoccupation with the man-eating nature of most animals in mythological time. Animals who lived in that time spoke and acted like human beings, some good and some bad. Many Yukon stories address the fundamental problem of who is to be in control — animals or men, nature or culture. This is the kind of 'problem-solving' which Levi-Strauss is talking about in his definition of myth. The myths explain how man, through his human qualities, subdued the animals and taught them not to eat human beings.[22]

But as a part of man's humanity, he had to learn appropriate behaviour towards animals — for example, the correct rituals for killing them and for handling the carcass afterwards. The animal will allow its body to be killed by a human

Native Groups of Northwestern North America



Map from Catharine McClellan, **My Old People Say**, National Museum of Canada, Ottawa, 1975, p.4.

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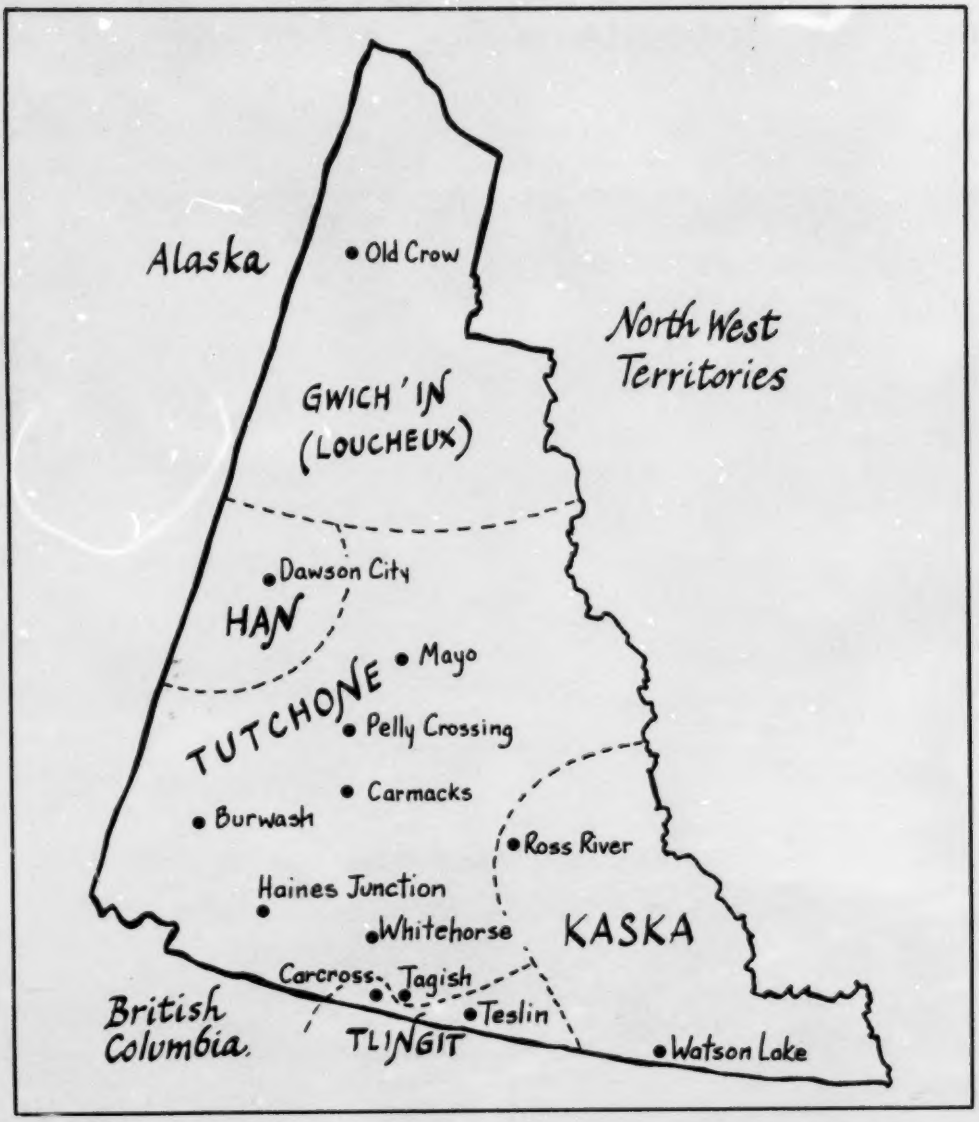
Yukon Native Languages



Languages spoken in the Yukon Territory are all considered "Athapaskan" languages, except for Tlingit, a coastal language spoken in the southern part of the Territory at Teslin and Carcross. Tutchone, Tagish, Kutchin and Han languages all belong to the Athapaskan "family" of languages, much as English, Italian and Spanish belong to the Indo-European language family.

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being but its spirit remains immortal and will return to earth in a new body as long as its former body is treated with respect. This puts great responsibility on the individual hunter. He must observe proper ritual. In effect, he must communicate with the spirit of the animal he pursues, often with the assistance of his own spiritual helpers. The dangers of insulting an animal and the consequences of such gross behaviour are illustrated in many Yukon stories.[23]

Almost universal in Indian and Inuit cultures, this ritual has been called 'The Apology for Death'. Frequently, the correct ways of killing animals are revealed in myth.

Catharine McClellan writes about the ambivalence Indian people traditionally felt in their relationships with animals:

> *"... in his relations with animals, the Yukon Indian meets beings with powers which often seem far greater than his own. Yet if he is to live at all, he must find ways of coming to terms with those powerful co-inhabitants of the earth. Much of his intellectual interest focuses on this problem and the uneasiness he frequently feels about animals suggests that the perfect solution for harmony between man and animals remains to be found. The line which most of us in western society draw between human beings and the rest of animate nature cannot be nearly so sharp in the minds of southern Yukoners. After all, in the past, animals usually appeared in human guise and even today they may sometimes appear as men or women. Since animals are endowed with spirits and are potential givers of good or evil, they can never be ignored. Their creation has made life possible for the Indian but, at the same time, it has placed a heavy burden of responsibility on him. Like the Eskimo, he must forever be killing and eating the bodies of animals inhabited by spirits if he is to stay alive."*[24]

in the world inhabited by grizzly bear, wet logs make the best fires.[27]

In symbolic terms, though, periodic trips by human beings to the animal world are not just speculations about nature and the observable world or about animal culture, but are also an internal psychological exploration of one's individual direction in life. A man does not really go under water or up to the sky or into a groundhog den for a year; he makes an internal voyage most evident in the experience of the shaman.[28] In effect, a myth in which a man or woman confronts the animal world really helps that person to confront the unsocialized inner self or 'opposite' which is in every human being. In the words of that modern mythical character, Pogo, "We have seen the enemy, and it is us."

The point to emphasize again, and it will be illustrated in Part 3, is that Yukon myths are in no way simple animal stories or fairy tales; they are fundamental philosophical interpretations of the world. They reflect curiosity and sensitivity to natural and supernatural questions, and they also reflect a great deal of speculation about man's own psychic needs.

B: The Idea of Hero in Yukon Myths

To explore the analogy of myth and the inward journey further, we should look at the hero theme in mythology, particularly Yukon mythology. Teachers may find this useful in drawing parallels with modern literature.

In most mythologies, the hero arises in response to a monster whose gargantuan physical characteristics may vary but who appears in folk traditions, nightmares and in literature as "the hoarder of general good".[29] Theseus fights the Minotaur and Odysseus battles with a Cyclops in Greek myth. Beowulf fights Grendal in medieval epic poetry. The hero of modern literature often battles distortions or ambiguities in himself. Mythological monsters take the form of

One of the most striking characteristics of the animal world in Athapaskan myth is the reversal of ordinary reality found there, a symbolic expression of the fundamentally different experience encountered in psychological exploration.

One of the most striking characteristics of the animal world is the reversal of ordinary reality found there. When a young boy insults fish and is taken to the fish world, he finds that they call swimming 'paddling a canoe' and that they call his family's fishcamp a 'war house'. He learns that fish eggs, which he considers food, are excrement in their eyes, and he is ridiculed for eating them.[25] In his adventures on the Yukon River, Beaverman finds animals eating human beings and tanning human skins. The boy who is taken away by a giant finds that what he calls 'moose' the giant calls 'rabbit', and what he calls a 'muskrat' the giant calls a 'louse'.[26] Likewise, giant animals in North American Indian stories. Similar examples occur in all cultures and from all times.

The hero's struggles can be understood at two distinct levels. They are dramatized with symbols from the everyday world but the equally important journey is internal. From earliest to modern times, mythology can be understood in this way. Myth provides an external explanation for the hero's internal struggles.

First, the hero detaches himself or withdraws from the world of everyday life and begins an internal journey. This internal world is utterly different from anything he has ever

known. In northern Athapaskan myth, this difference is symbolized by the reversals of ordinary reality which are described in the animal world.

> *"The hero ventures forth from the world of common day to a region of supernatural wonder. Fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won. The hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.*[30]

C: The Trickster in North American Mythology

A favourite person in North American mythology is the Trickster who is an ambivalent combination of good and evil. He is at one moment a world transformer, at another a clown, the next a selfish and petulant human being, and so on. His exploits are told with considerable laughter and humour and it is clear that people have a fondness for his roguish humanity. Stories of his exploits in the Yukon are punctuated with comments like, "You know what that Crow is like, don't you?" and then an enthusiastic account of yet another adventure.

In most mythologies in the world, the hero arises in response to a monster whose gargantuan physical characteristics may vary but who appears in folk traditions, nightmares and literature as "the hoarder of general good".

The heroic quest is dramatized in the adventures of Prometheus who brought fire from the gods to mankind, in the story of Jason who sought the Golden Fleece, of Odysseus who encountered fabulous adventures on his return home from Troy, and of Esuya, or Beaverman, who made the Yukon River safe for human beings. In psychological terms,

> *"The hero, whether God or Goddess, man or woman, the figure in a myth or the dreamer of a dream, discovers and assimilates his opposite, his own unsuspected self... One by one, the resistances are broken. He must put aside his pride, his virtue, beauty and lif and bow or submit to the absolutely intolerable. Then he finds that he and his opposite are not of differing species, but one flesh."*[31]

Often heros are given a series of dangerous tasks to perform, like Hercules in Greek myth or the son-in-law tests popular in North American myth. In southern Yukon mythology, Beaverman is sent by a potential father-in-law (Grizzly) to perform tasks which could kill him.[32] The man who married the sun's daughter also had to perform dangerous errands for his father-in-law.[33] In both cases, the heroes are assisted by guidance from supernatural powers or spirit helpers. Frequently in North American myth the heroes are two brothers who work together to help mankind.[34] Sometimes an insignificant person who has always been rejected or overlooked becomes a hero when others fail.[35]

The hero theme in Athapaskan myth will become clearer in the examples in Part 3. However, the dual meaning of the mythical hero's journey must be kept in mind. Superficially, the action of myth takes place in a world full of familiar symbols in which the protagonist lives. At another level, the action describes an internal psychological voyage in which the hero meets and confronts his own internal conflicts.

The generalized Trickster figure belongs to the oldest strata of myth. He appears in all hunting cultures and survives in a modified form in later agricultural societies. He goes under many names — Wee-sa-kay-jac of the eastern Cree, Napi of the Blackfoot, Raven of the northwest coast, Coyote of the American southwest, Rabbit of the central United States, Crow of the Yukon; in Europe he is Reynard the Fox, in Polynesia he is Maui and in Africa one of his forms is Anansi. His essential characteristics continue in Loki of Germanic and Norse mythology, the Egyptian Set or Seth, the Greek Hermes. In these later agricultural societies, though, his character is divided in two, with either good or evil clearly predominating. Hermes tends to be mischievous but generally good; Loki and Seth are more often portrayed as fundamentally negative characters.

The Trickster is a figure of chaos, the principle of disorder. He embodies two distinct and conflicting roles: creator of the world and bringer of culture on one hand, glutton and instigator of trouble on the other. In the Yukon, Crow creates the world, brings light, fire and fresh water and is generally a Prometheus figure. He creates man and teaches him the rules of culture. But he also marries Fish Mother so he can eat without doing any work, frightens people away from their village so he can eat all the food they have stored, makes Chickenhawk run all the risks involved in stealing fire, and adopts Caribou as his 'brother', then kills him for his fat — hardly exemplary behaviour.

While the Trickster frequently makes people laugh, he is by no means merely a figure of light entertainment. Carl Jung describes him as a collective shadow figure, the epitome of all the inferior traits of character in each of us.[36] In her essay on North American Indian myth, Feldmann elaborates the psychological message:

"The plot of the Trickster is quite clear ... A normal individual ... takes it upon himself to defy all customs, sacred and profane. As a result, he finds himself deserted and alone and is thrown back externally upon the vaguest type of relationship with nature as symbolized by the birds who taunt and mock him. Internally, he is thrown back upon his primitive, undisciplined appetites, hunger and sex."[37]

Instead of getting involved in socialized, co-operative activities, Crow wanders from place to place, a vagabond who systematically violates all accepted human values.

The stories discussed in Part 3 give many examples of Crow's adventures. Older people in the Yukon are sometimes puzzled by the seemingly irreconcilable aspects of his character, sometimes suggesting that Crow was once God and then became the Devil.[38]

But the Trickster, in a complex world, must be complex himself, leading Joseph Campbell to conclude that:

"... he breaks the whole of life into a vast, horrendous Divine Comedy. Its Olympian laugh is not escapist in the least, but hard, with the hardness of life itself. Mythology in this respect makes the tragic attitude seem somewhat hysterical and the merely moral judgment shortsighted."[39]

While the elaborate group rites of agricultural societies outwardly appear to be more complex because they are more formalized, the psychic energies called into play in the shamanistic experience surpass the group-oriented ceremonies of agricultural people.

Essentially, this is a theme central to much of contemporary psychology today — that is, personal growth is an individual rather than a collective process. The individual like the shaman or hero of myth really cannot contribute much of value to the group until he, himself, is complete.

More directly related to our theme here, myth can be seen as a public dramatization of the shamanistic vision. The voyages that Indians made to the fish world or the groundhog world are mythical descriptions of a shamanistic experience.[41]

The shaman is an outsider, an explorer. He stands apart from his group just as the mystic, poet or creative artist might in the twentieth century. The concerns of the group are really not his concerns; yet, because he has gone to the 'heart of the world', he can contribute more to the group than its other more culture-bound members, particularly as a guide to others making a similar voyage. He suffers isolation because he has moved beyond the local system of beliefs. He is the prototype of many heroes of modern twentieth century literature.

A shaman represented spiritual authority in all hunting cultures, particularly in circumpolar cultures. The voyages that Indians make to the fish world, groundhog world or bear world are mythical descriptions of a shamanistic experience.

D: Shamans

It is difficult to appreciate Yukon mythology without having some understanding of the complexity of the traditional shaman or healer, the living example of the mythological hero. A shaman represented spiritual authority in all hunting cultures, particularly in circum-polar northern cultures.

In the Yukon, the shaman has always been the unusually gifted man who obtained personal power by experiencing an overwhelming psychological crisis, described in terms of a voyage. While the experience might resemble a mental breakdown to the untrained western eye, it was the normal experience of the gifted man and distinguished him as someone of unusual intuition and personal depth. Speaking of shamans the world over, Campbell notes:

"... the shamanistic crisis, when properly fostered, yields an adult not only of superior intelligence and refinement but also of greater personal stamina and vitality of spirit than is normal for members of his group."[40]

Myth and Literature

Although they are drawn from a non-western culture, many of the preceding themes appear again and again in art, literature, psychology or philosophy of the past hundred years. While it is one thing to demonstrate the global universality of certain mythical themes, it is the persistence of these themes over time that makes the myths of shamans of the past recognizable in our own era.

Myth, itself, can be a creative force. According to Thomas Mann,

"While in the life of the human race the mythical is an early and primitive way of thought, in the life of the individual it is a late and mature one."

In the twentieth century, myths come alive in literature, especially in poetry, and mythical themes can be traced in

poetry at every grade level from the time students are able to understand the idea of metaphor and simile. In literature, from folk tales to novels to poetry, really creative acts take place during an interval of separation from the concerns of the world. The themes are universal. Monsters and trolls may be battled and less terrifying distortions may be understood in fairy tales and in poetry. Heroes wear many faces, from Jack the Giant Killer to Superman to Alice who faced fabulous and fanciful distortions in Wonderland, to the protagonist in modern literature who faces conflicts at a quiet personal level.

In western society, the transition from childhood to adult life is a gradual one; we do not emphasize what are called 'rites of passage'. If children can learn, in school or elsewhere, to appreciate literature and mythology as guides to the inevitable complexities and crises of life, then students may be encouraged to discover, enjoy and create fiction, art or poetry on their own.

The emphasis in contemporary education seems to be on giving the child tools for rational understanding of the world. This is an essential part of education, but it should not define the limits of education. Literature and myth provide a guide to other aspects of life — creative, intuitive and philosophical — and those dimensions are also part of our day-to-day world. If myth can be studied with that perspective in mind, it will contribute much more educationally than if myths are presented simply as amusing and diversionary anecdotes.

Myth and the Twentieth Century

Myth is not merely fantasy. It is one part of the history of ideas, one key to ways people think and have thought throughout the history of mankind. Our thinking need not always proceed logically from one visible proposition to the next. Before the industrial revolution, people recognized that the living, physical individual was only a fraction of the total person. They dramatized man's psychological and spiritual aspects in myth and ritual.

Any study of comparative mythology shows how similar themes are widely distributed throughout the world, across space and time. For hunters, the animal world symbolized everything which was alien. With the development of agriculture in the Near East and in South America, the focus shifted to the skies and the socially trained priest was considered to embody divinity. In Greece, the focus shifted to man himself and the myth was elevated to the status of instructor. In Greek epics, protagonists face unavoidable human disaster, brought on by their failure to follow the rules. The message is the same as one which the Trickster brings to hunters: exaggerated self-interest is the root of all evil.

Today, the fundamental problem of man in western society has been described as his ignorance of his unconscious motives, the body which no longer recognizes contact with the mind.

> *"There can be no question: the psychological dangers through which earlier generations were guided by the symbols and spiritual exercises of their mythological and religious inheritance, we today ... must face alone or, at best, with only tentative, impromptu and not very effective guidance. This is our problem as modern 'enlightened' individuals for whom all gods and devils have been rationalized out of existence."*[42]

The great group mythologies of the so-called high civilizations do little to help contemporary, modern man. For them, all meaning was in the group and the individual had to be reshaped to fit the group. This remains a central ideological position in many countries and cultures. However, there is growing recognition that, to be a reasonable, whole, functioning member of any society, the individual must first bridge the rationalist gap between his own mind and body. The individual must try to make the modern world spiritually significant.

Ironically, today it seems that the 'oldest' mythologies, those of hunting societies, may have the most relevance for modern man. In Athapaskan myth, for example, the individual must explore his world on his own, but ultimately he must come back to his society with a new contribution, or his knowledge is useless. Once he has mastered the 'two worlds' which are actually one and the same, he can pass back and forth at will between the spiritual world and the world of social action. In other words, one can become balanced between inner and outer life.

This is an approach to mythology which may provide one perspective for teachers who want to present mythology as prescribed in the British Columbia curriculum. Social studies classes provide a vehicle for exploration of local, historical influences on myth. English literature courses may encourage a more universal, psychological approach.

The following section outlines some very general approaches which may be taken to grades 1 — 7 social studies and grades 8 — 12 English courses.

The challenge for contemporary man is to bridge the rationalist gap between mind and body. The mythologies of hunting societies which date from man's earliest history may still have the most to teach us.

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[15]Angela Sidney and Kitty Smith in **My Stories Are My Wealth**, p. 53.

[16]Campbell, **Primitive Mythology**, p. 462.

[17]McClellan, **Old People**, p. 67.

[18]Campbell, **Primitive Mythology**, pp. 135, 213.

[19]Amy Cruse, **The Book of Myths**, Clarke, Irwin and Company Ltd., 1972, p. 146.

[20]Campbell, **Primitive Mythology**, p. 242.

[21]Feldmann, **Story-Telling Stone**, pp. 9-10.

[22]See, for example, the Smart Beaver or Beaverman Tales in **My Stories Are My Wealth**, pp. 22-38.

[23]See, for example, "The Boy Who Stayed With Fish", "The Man Who Stayed With Groundhog" and "The Girl Who Stayed With Grizzly", all in **My Stories Are My Wealth**, pp. 45, 53, 62.

[24]McClellan, **Old People**, pp. 91-2.

[25]Angela Sidney, in **My Stories Are My Wealth**, p. 49.

[26]Ibid, p. 102.

[27]McClellan, **Old People**, p. 75.

[28]See page 17 of this guide.

[29]Joseph Campbell, **The Hero With A Thousand Faces**, Bollingen Series No. 17, Princeton University Press, 1949, p. 15.

[30]Ibid, p. 30.

[31]Ibid, p. 108.

[32]**My Stories Are My Wealth**, p. 28.

[33]Ibid, p. 67.

[34]Ibid, pp. 39-44.

[35]Ibid, pp. 56-7. Only the youngest brother can bring the protagonist back to the community.

[36]Campbell, **Primitive Mythology**, p. 274.

[37]Feldmann, **Story-Telling Stone**, pp. 26-7.

[38]McClellan, **My Old People Say**, p. 73.

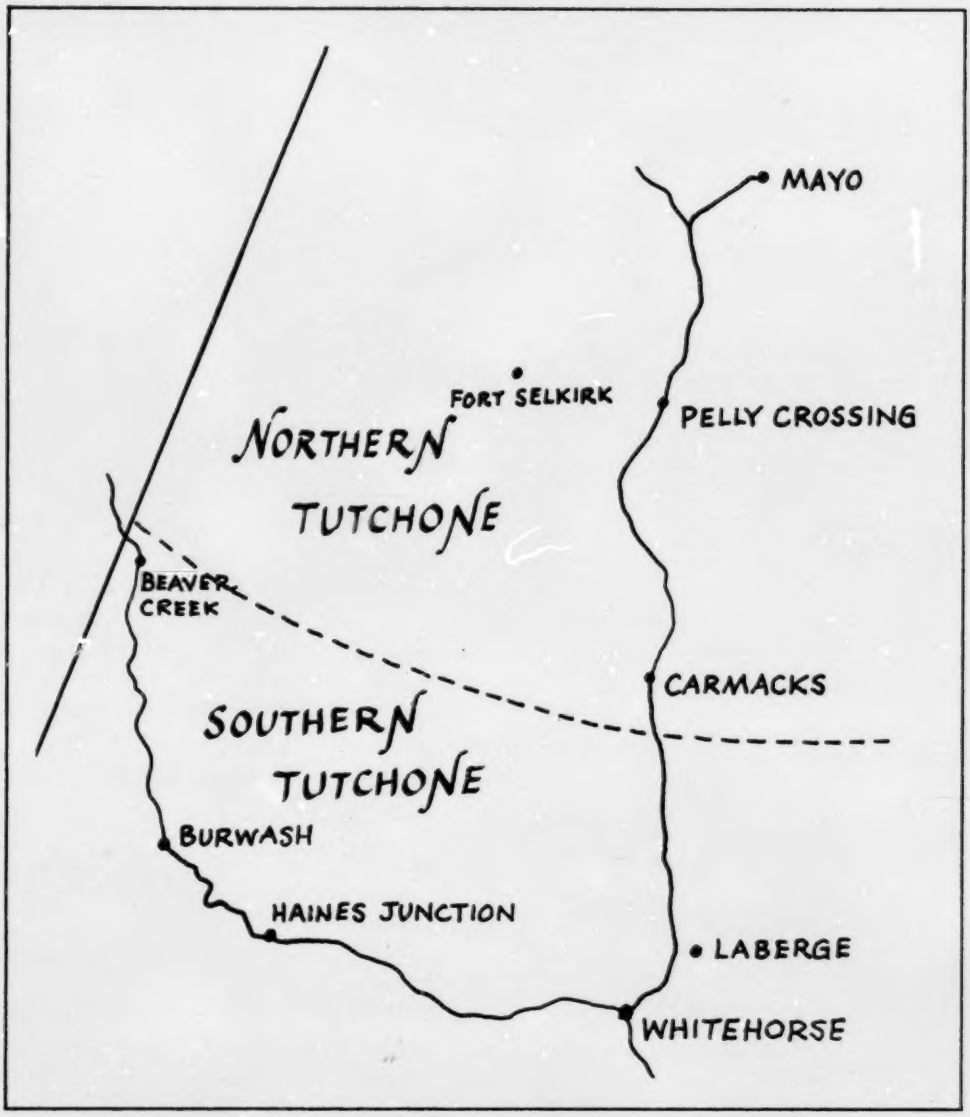
[39]Campbell, **Hero**, p. 44.

[40]Campbell, **Primitive Mythology**, p. 253.

[41]See "The Boy Who Stayed With Fish" or "The Man Who Stayed With Groundhog", both in **My Stories Are My Wealth**, pp. 45, 53.

[42]Campbell, **Hero**, p. 104.

Tutchone-Speaking Communities of the Yukon Territory



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2 Myths and Legends in the School Curriculum: Social Studies and English

Myths illustrate some of the universal human problems discussed as topics in the grade 4 social studies unit:

(i) food
(ii) clothing
(iii) shelter
(iv) families
(v) communities
(vi) education
(vii) games and recreation
(viii) religious beliefs

ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES

In the first three years of the elementary social studies program, students learn about people as social beings organized into families and communities. In the fourth year, attention shifts to people as cultural beings. In the fifth grade, the emphasis is on Canada as a nation. In grade 6, the topic shifts to cultural realms of the world and, in the seventh year, to cultural stages.

At each level, mythology can be used to complement the present curriculum. Stories in **My Stories Are My Wealth** illustrate relationships within families (grade 1), interaction within communities (grade 2), interaction between communities (grade 3), and they put all this into a cultural context (grade 4). They illustrate aspects of life in a particular region of Canada (grade 5), suggest something of the psychic unity of people of all cultures (grade 6) and reflect some aspects of very ancient mythologies (grade 7).

This section of the guide deals first with grades 1 to 5 and then looks at year 6 and year 7 individually.

SOCIAL STUDIES 1—5

The unit presently used at the grade 4 level of the social studies programme in the Yukon, **Early Yukon Cultures,** presents some Yukon materials which can be adapted to any of the first five years. The stories in **My Stories Are My Wealth** can be used to illustrate the same themes.

The grade 4 unit looks at some universal problems and at particular Yukon solutions. These problems include finding food, clothing and shelter; living in families and communities; teaching children; having fun; and expressing religious beliefs about how the world works. Some examples of ways in which each problem is addressed in myth are listed below, but this is not an exhaustive list. *All page numbers refer to pages in* **My Stories Are My Wealth,** *unless otherwise indicated.*

1. Provision of Food

(a) Crow stories are excellent stories to illustrate Yukon foods to children because Crow is preoccupied with the problem of finding food and spends much of his life trying to trick people into giving him a free meal. Because the stories are amusing, they appeal to children; in many communities, children will be able to learn additional versions of Crow stories from adults. Examples of stories illustrating foods, in **My Stories Are My Wealth**, include 'Crow Gets Married' (pp. 4-5), 'Crow Fools His Brother' (p. 6), 'Crow Loses His Eye' (p. 7), 'Crow Loses His Nose' (p. 8), 'Crow and Whale' (p. 18) and 'Crow Fools His Brother Deer' (p. 9).

(b) The 'Star Husband' story, especially Mrs. Smith's version (pp. 75-79), describes foods people eat and also some of the customs associated with food. For example, traditionally a son-in-law would be expected to get food for his wife's parents for at least one full year after he married their daughter. The Star Husbands fulfilled that role even though they lived in another world.

(c) Another story illustrating food and traditions associated with food is the 'Animal Mother' story, especially Mrs. Smith's version (pp. 85-89), which explains how Indians

first got food. Animal Mother made animals and taught people how to respect and use them. Before she created animals, people had only buffalo and goat to eat.

(d) Some other stories explain that it is permissible to kill animals for food as long as you show them respect when you kill them (see 'The Boy Who Stayed With Fish', pp. 46 and 49, and 'The Man Who Stayed With Groundhog', pp. 53 and 55).

2. Provision of Clothing

(a) 'Star Husband', told by Mrs. Kitty Smith (pp. 75-79), illustrates the importance of animal skins and furs for making clothing, especially blankets, babiche, mitts and pants.

(b) Children usually enjoy the story of how Crow lost his blanket (p. 6) which shows that a good strong gopher blanket is better than a pretty, new, but poorly made one.

(c) The story of how Animal Mother gave Rabbit poor skin might be used in a discussion of which skins are used to make clothing (pp. 87-88).

(c) In 'Good Luck Lady' (p. 80), the first woman lived in an underwater house and people descended on a magic mat. Underwater homes are common in mythologies throughout the world.

(d) In the story of 'The Boy Who Was Taken Away' (p. 102), the boy and the giant made camp several times, much as people would make camp for the night.

4. Families

Families are discussed in the grade 1 social studies unit and in grade 4 the emphasis is on families in other cultures.

(a) The 'Star Husband' story (especially the version on p. 75) illustrates feelings in families. Traditionally, when an Indian man married a woman, he moved to her family's camp. Even though the two Star Husbands were good providers and were kind to their wives, the girls missed their parents so much that they ran away to their parents' home.

(b) In the story of 'The Two Smart Brothers' (p. 39) and 'The Boy Who Was Taken Away' (p. 102), the appropriate dramatic ending for each story is a reunion with family.

For examples of Plains Indian and Woodland Indian Community Life, see kit **American Indian Cultures: Plains and Woodland,** *from audio-visual centre (Dept. of Education)* — **K287**

See filmstrips in kit **Tales From The Treetops,** *narrated by Chief Dan George (recommended grades 2 to 6-plus)* — **K278**

(d) Mrs. Sidney's version of 'Game Mother' gives a description of the importance of having snowshoes to move in winter (p. 90).

3. Provision of Shelter

The most direct references to shelter in these myths are descriptions of animal homes, but each of these homes mirrors human homes in some way. Children may wish to describe, draw or compare traditional Indian homes with the *idea* of homes or shelters described in the myths.

(a) 'The Man Who Stayed With Groundhog', especially Mrs. Smith's version (p. 53), described a house where groundhog people lived.

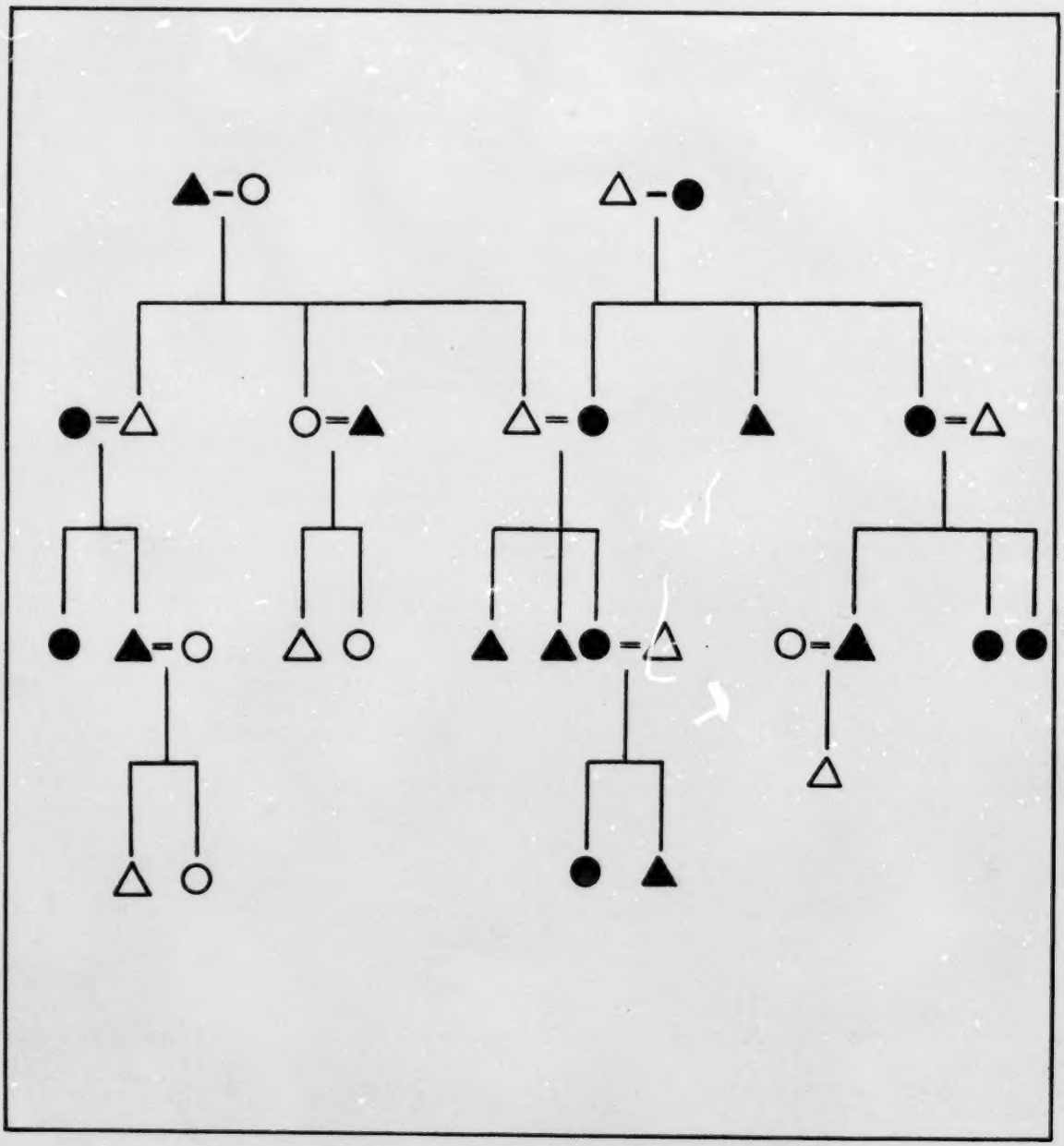
(b) In the 'Sun Story' (p. 67), a little mouse lived inside a home in the ground and invited the hero in; while everything at first seemed to be in miniature, suddenly everything in the house became life-size.

(c) Traditionally, an Indian girl in this part of northern Canada was supposed to be shy with her brother and not look directly at him or talk to him when she became a teenager. A girl who disobeyed this rule turned her brothers, and then herself, to stone (p. 58).

(d) A Yukon Indian man usually had closer links with his nephews — his sister's sons — than with his own sons because they belonged to his matrilineal kin group. He was responsible for teaching his nephews much the way a father is supposed to teach his sons in modern western society. His own sons belonged to his wife's kin group and were instructed by his wife's brother. When Kakasgook went out hunting, he took his nephews with him rather than his sons (p. 109).

(e) When a woman was stolen by another tribe, her husband could expect that his brothers would all come with him to help him find her (p. 97). Similarly, when a man went to stay with Groundhog, his brothers spent a whole year trying

Diagram of a Yukon Indian Family



△ Man

○ Woman

= Marriage

Descent

▲/● Crow Man/Woman

△/○ Wolf Man/Woman

25

A GUIDE TO NAMES FROM CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY USED IN THE TEXT

GREEK MYTHOLOGY

Baucis: Baucis was a poor peasant woman who, with her husband Philemon, sheltered the Greek gods Zeus and Hermes when they arrived as travellers. Later, Zeus rewarded Baucis and Philemon by saving them from floods.

Cyclops (pl. **Cyclopes**): In Homeric legend, the Cyclopes were a race of one-eyed giants who inhabited Sicily.

Cronus: The youngest of the Titans, Cronus, deposed his father Uranus, then married his sister, Rhea, and was in turn overthrown by his son, Zeus.

Gaia (or **Gaea**): Gaia was the early Greek goddess of earth, mother and wife of Uranus. Her offspring included the Titans, the Cyclopes and the "Hundred-Handed Ones", all precursors of the Olympian gods.

Hera: Hera, the sister and wife of Zeus, was the queen of the Greek gods, goddess of women and marriage,

Hercules: Hercules, a son of Zeus, was renowned for his great strength and endurance, particularly for his performance of twelve gigantic labours imposed upon him.

Hermes: Hermes appears in Greek myth as the messenger of the gods, and also as god of science, commerce, travel, eloquence and cunning. He performed his duties wearing winged sandals.

Hundred-Handed Ones: With the Titans and Cyclopes, the 'Hundred-Handed Ones' were among the offspring of Gaia and Uranus.

Jason: Jason, Prince of Iolcus in northeastern Greece, led the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece. The Fleece was guarded by a dragon and was recovered only with the help of Medea, whom Jason later married.

Odysseus: Odysseus, king of Ithica, was one of the Greek leaders in the Trojan war. After the fall of Troy, he spent ten years wandering. His journey is described by Homer in the **Odyssey**.

Prometheus: Prometheus was a Titan who stole fire from heaven for mankind. As punishment, he was chained to a rock where an eagle daily devoured his liver, which was made whole again each night. He was released by Hercules.

Theseus: Theseus, son of the king of Athens, slew the minotaur which had terrorized Athens. A monster with the head of a bull and the body of a man, the Minotaur was kept in a labyrinth in Crete by King Minos. It was annually fed seven young Athenian men and women.

Titans: These were a race of giant gods, born of Gaia and Uranus. They were vanquished and succeeded by the Olympian gods.

Zeus: The supreme deity in Greek mythology, Zeus was the son of Cronus and Rhea.

EGYPTIAN MYTHOLOGY

Horus: In Egyptian mythology, Horus was the hawk-headed god of the sun.

Osiris: Osiris was the god of the underworld and the lord of the dead. His sister and wife was Isis.

Set (or **Seth**): Set appears in Egyptian myth as the animal-headed god of darkness, night and evil.

NORSE MYTHOLOGY

Beowulf: Beowulf became the hero of an Old English epic poem of the eighth century. A warrior prince, he killed the monster Grendal and Grendal's mother.

Loki: Loki appears as the Norse god who created disorder and mischief. Occasionally, he acted as a helper to, but more often as the enemy of, the gods.

Odin: Odin was the supreme deity in Norse myth, the god of war, art, culture and the dead.

BABYLONIAN MYTHOLOGY

Gilgamesh: In Sumerian and Babylonian mythology, he was a king, the hurculean hero of the Gilgamesh epic.

Marduk: Marduk was the chief Babylonian deity. He was originally a local sun god who took power by defying the female goddess, Tiamat.

Tiamat: Tiamat, like her counterpart, Gaia, in Greek mythology, was the original deity, mother of all, until her power was usurped by Marduk.

to get him back before they finally succeeded (pp. 55-57).

(f) A young man was expected to look after and help his grandmother (p. 113).

5. Communities

In grades 2 and 3, children learn about communities. In most societies in the world and in most periods of history, people have used kinship as the fundamental organizing principle in their communities. The basis of community life in the Yukon was the kinship division between Wolf and Crow described very briefly on page 44 of the booklet **'Early Yukon Cultures'** used in the grade 4 social studies programme.

(a) The story of how Crow made people (p. 3) is one description of the origin of Wolf and Crow divisions.

(b) In the conclusion of 'The Boy Who Stayed With Fish', the boy's community had to fast for several days to bring him back to the world of people and the community (pp. 48 and 52).

(c) When the boy had a vision in the story 'The First Time They Know K'och'en' (p. 113), he called together everyone in the community and shared his new knowledge with them. If his knowledge were to have any value, it had to be shared with the community.

(d) Sometimes communities had friendly contacts and at other times they were involved in disputes. The story of 'The First Potlatch' (pp. 93 and 95) shows both aspects of relations between communities. A worm was raised by a Tlingit woman as a weapon against people living in the Yukon. However, the worm was destroyed and the first potlatch, made at its death, continues to be a symbol of unity and exchange both in coastal and Yukon communities.

6. Provision of Education

Traditionally, myths and legends were one of the main ways of educating young people into the beliefs and customs of the community. Because myths were instructive, they often contain a clear moral or lesson.

The best way to illustrate ways in which stories are instructive is to learn whether an older person from the community would be willing to come to class to tell stories to the children. (In some schools, the person instructing the Indian language classes may also be willing to tell some of the stories.) Simply having older people in the classroom indicates to the children that traditional knowledge is valuable. This is probably the most important reason for having myths taught at an elementary level.

(a) A fundamental lesson is taught each time a taboo is broken. When a boy insults Fish by calling it mouldy (pp. 46-49), when a girl insults Dog by jumping over its legs (p. 58), when a man is disrespectful to Groundhog (pp. 53 and 55), when another is disrespectful to Moose (p. 89), they all have to pay. Respect for nature and animals is an important rule in traditional Indian culture.

(b) When Crow insults his benefactor, the Fish Mother (p. 5) or when he wants the pretty blanket so badly that he throws away his old one first (p. 6), he can be duped. When Crow is crafty but creative, as in his creation of the world, he helps people (pp. 1-3). Crow's ambivalent character is a good subject for discussion even with very young children.

(c) When a man saved the life of a little mouse, she came back to help him later (p. 68).

(d) Skookum Jim obeyed the well-known ritual when he met Wealth Woman, or Good Luck Lady, he found gold (p. 83).

7. Games and Recreation

The stories and songs also have pure entertainment value and are enjoyed by people of all ages. Crow stories illustrate this, particularly such favourites as 'Crow Loses His Eye' (p. 7).

See Walt Disney Media Kit, **White Wilderness,** *especially filmstrip "The Wolf and the Wolverine."* **K282**

See film "Beaver Dam" (N.F.B. 16 mm, colour) from Media Services, Yukon Regional Library.

8. Religious Beliefs

Myths reflect beliefs about the world at many levels — nature, moral order, philosophy, metaphysics. But for students at the grades 1 to 5 level, the clearest examples will be beliefs about animals, about the need to co-exist with animals, about the importance of respecting and not insulting animals.

(a) The best story to describe beliefs about animals is the Animal Mother story on pages 85 and 90. Animal Mother created the present animals and gave them their distinctive characteristics.

(b) Animals which play an important part in stories include: fish (p. 45), groundhog (p. 53), grizzly (pp. 62, 91), wolverine (p. 25), eagle (pp. 29-30), crow (pp. 1-21), deer (p. 9), whale (pp. 9, 18), chickenhawk (p. 15), beaver (pp. 22-38), otter (p. 25), buffalo (p. 42), dog (p. 58), mouse (p. 67), bear (p. 27), goat (pp. 85-86), rabbit (pp. 87, 88, 91), sheep (pp. 31, 87, 91), ptarmigan and grouse (p. 87), snipe (p. 38), porcupine (pp. 39-40, 85), wolf (pp. 87-88), caribou (pp. 87, 91), mink (p. 24) and moose (pp. 87-89, 91-92).

Geographical Context

The grade 4 unit also considers the importance of northern geography. All the solutions to human problems described in the preceeding pages take place within a northern geographical context. It is worth noting that in the Yukon, myths are often tied to specific geographical features. For example, Beaverman 'cleaned up' the Yukon River; specific monsters are often identified with specific settings along that river; Game Mother hung her trampoline from four mountains near Carcross then moved to Five Aces Mountain (sometimes called Three Aces) near Teslin. Older Indian people will be able to elaborate on this in each community, because settings for one story may differ in different communities.

Although they are not included in this book, some legends reflect the difficulties of living in an unpredictable northern climate. Students in most communities will be able to learn about the year summer did not come from older people. Mrs. Smith's description of Animal Mother makes reference to this year (p. 89).

(a) Students could make puppets to dramatize a particular story. Primary students could make rod puppets — masks on sticks. Students in grades 3 and 4 might make hand puppets. Students at grades 4, 5 and 6 could make shadow puppets and even put on puppet shows for younger students.

(b) The teacher could encourage students to make a pictorial time line mural showing the sequence of events in a particular story. Teachers might also use flannel boards to illustrate the sequence of events.

(c) Students in grades 4 and 5 could prepare a diorama showing a setting and some aspect of the action in a story.

(d) Students might make animal masks and then dramatize a story.

(e) A class might make a three-dimensional model of a geographical feature important in myth; for example, a model might be made of Animal Mother's trampoline, attached to four mountains near Carcross.

(f) Teachers might invite local elders to class to teach an Indian game, such as the stick game.

All these activities encourage skills such as listening to stories, verbal skills, abilities to discuss and make decisions, creative and artistic skills.

Sample Activity

The system of moieties or clans — the Crow and Wolf divisions — is still very important in the Yukon today. A child is born into the same division as his or her mother; his father will be a member of the *opposite* clan. Members of the same clan consider themselves to be brothers and sisters. They joke with each other when they are children. All their lives they help each other whenever they can and they share with each other. People of the same clan teach each other; for example, an uncle teaches his sister's children, his nephews and members of his clan, more than their father does. Their father teaches *his* nephews, his sister's children.

People in opposite clans show respect to one another in their behaviour. Children will marry into the opposite clan when they grow up. When someone dies, people of the opposite clan will help the bereaved family.

See the following filmstrips: **American Indian Legends** *(6 filmstrips and audio cassettes)* — **K81**

(i) Wild Rose
(ii) How Mother Possum Got Her Pouch
(iii) Saynday and the Gambler
(iv) How the Woodpecker Got His Feathers
(v) How Corn Came to the Choctaws
(vi) The Ptarmigan's Beak

Some Suggested Activities for Skill Development

The preceding examples, and many others, can be used in social studies, science, language arts and English at a primary level. Ideally, the study of myths, like any other subject, should encourage the development of various skills. A story should be told straight through first, then re-examined by the class. For example:

Every community in the central and southern Yukon has Crow and Wolf divisions. When people visit another community, they will want to learn who belongs to their clan. This will tell them how to behave with the people they meet.

A classroom teacher might divide primary students into two clans, Crow and Wolf. They could each wear a sign indicating whether they are Crow or Wolf. Explain to the children that members with the same sign/picture are like brothers and sisters and discuss how brothers and sisters behave with one another. Suggest important aspects of each sign — for example: crows are clever and live by their wits; wolves are strong and honest.

The class could then undertake regular projects where members of the same clan help, share with and teach one another. Members of one group should be particularly polite to members of the opposite group.

Children could learn from parents more information about how Crows should behave to one another, how Wolves should behave to one another and how Crows and Wolves should behave to each other. The teacher will be able to integrate this information in ways in which children can use it in classroom activities.

Filmstrips:

(i) How the Bear Lost His Tail: An Indian Legend — **FS 835**
(ii) Seven Little Stars: An Indian Legend — **FS 837**
(iii) When Goose Stole The Sun: An Indian Legend — **FS 838**
(iv) Why a Porcupine Has Quills: An Indian Legend — **FS 839**

SOCIAL STUDIES — GRADE 6

The social studies unit for the sixth year considers 'Culture Realms of the World'. The British Columbia curriculum guide to the social studies units suggests that at this stage students should learn that "cultures transcend the boundaries of nations and unite large groups of people in a global sense".

If a teacher chooses to look at mythology as one of the underlying processes which transcends all cultures, he or she might look at some of the universal themes in myth, like those outlined in the introduction to Part 1 of this guide.

Two universal myths, the 'Origin of the World' and 'The Flood', indicate that all cultures have asked the same kinds of questions about man's earliest history. And all over the world they have developed remarkably similar answers, suggesting the psychological unity of mankind regardless of culture.

North American hunting cultures place particular emphasis on 'Origin of Animal' themes in myth. Students might link these stories with the very real importance of animals in hunting societies.

All mythologies contain so-called "Pourquoi" tales which give explanations of why the natural world appears as it does. In Yukon myths, "Pourquoi" tales are often embedded in larger cycles of stories, like the Crow or Beaverman cycles.

1. Origin of Earth

(a) Part 1 of this guide gives a version of the Kaska 'Origin of Earth' myth and compares it with other Yukon beliefs about the beginning of the world.

(b) The Judeo-Christian Bible describes a dark formless sea in the opening chapters of Genesis. At the beginning of time, first light then earth and then seas were created.

(c) The Greeks saw Chaos as the primordial condition of the earth. Then Gaia, the earth mother, was created and she gave birth to the Heavens, the Titans, the Cyclopes and the 'Hundred-Handed Ones'. Cronus, one of the Titans, gave birth to Zeus who ultimately seized control of the world.

(d) North American Indian myths give a significant creative role to animals. An Iroquois myth and a Huron myth from eastern Canada give another variation of the Yukon theme of creation. Long ago, the only people lived in a sky world and the earth was covered with water. Only water animals existed: toad, beaver, muskrat, fish, turtle and seabirds. One day, a woman fell from the sky and two loons spread their wings to cushion her fall. When the loons tired, turtle took her on his back. But the animals knew that she needed earth to survive, so one by one they tried to dive for it — first beaver, then muskrat, then toad, who drowned but floated back with mud in his mouth. The woman spread the mud and it grew until it became the earth.[1]

(e) Yukon versions of creation give Crow a central place and some of the first stories from that cycle may be included in any discussion of world beginnings.

(f) Have children learn a version of creation from their own community.

See filmstrip "Myths and Ceremonies" in kit **American Indians of the North Pacific Coast.** *This filmstrip shows how Raven, like Crow, made the world, animals and men.* **K 281**

For a Greek version of world origins, see the filmstrip "Mount Olympus" in kit **Mythology. K 271.**

2. The Flood

Geological evidence suggests that life did begin in the sea and that the seas once covered much of the earth's surface. Not surprisingly, most religions have a tradition of a Great Flood. (See Part 1 for discussion of this theme in the Yukon.)

(a) A Kaska version from the northern part of British Columbia and the south-eastern Yukon appears in the introduction to this guide. Most North American Indian traditions contain such a story.

(b) The biblical version of the Flood treats it as a punishment for man's wickedness. The Greek version has a similar theme of vengeance. Zeus decided to punish mankind and found only two people, Philemon and Baucis, worth saving.

(c) Indian versions of the Flood differ somewhat in that it is not discussed as punishment for man; in fact, the main characters are usually animals rather than men.

3. Origins of Animals

Animal stories play a significant part in Yukon mythology and there is considerable discussion of this both in Part 1 and Part 3 of this guide. Because of the significance of animals, stories of animal origins play an important part in northern Indian and Inuit myths.

(a) While Crow is given a significant place in the creation of sun, moon and stars as we now know them, it is Animal Mother who is credited with the creation of animals. Her story is told by Mrs. Angela Sidney and Mrs. Kitty Smith in **My Stories Are My Wealth**, pages 85-92 (see also Part 3 of this guide.)

(b) The Sandy Lake Cree also have an Earth Mother, O-ma-ma-ma, who gave birth to the main animals. First came Thunderbird, who protects other animals from the Sea Serpent; second came the Frog who helps to control insects; third came Wee-sa-kay-jac, the supernatural Trickster hero who is so much like Crow in the Yukon or Raven on the coast. Then came Wolf, then Beaver, and finally Fish, Rock, Grass and Trees. But it was Wee-sa-kay-jac, like Crow, who made people.

(c) The Inuit Sedna, the Sea Mother, gave life to all sea mammals. A child of two giants, Sedna refused to marry anyone her father suggested and instead ran off to marry a suitor in a distant country. Only after she had been there for some time did she realize that these were fulmars, scavenger bird people. When her father came to visit her, he found her homesick and anxious to return with him. They set out, but the fulmars pursued them, whipping the sea into great waves. Fearing for his life, the father threw Sedna into the sea. She clung to the boat but, in desperation, her father cut off her fingers to save himself. Each digit became one of the sea animals and Sedna became goddess of the sea, the mother of all sea creatures.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

(a) Tell students two or more versions of one of the origin myths and then have them invent their own origin story — of the world, the sun, fire, etc. Both Robert Livesay's **Faces of Myth** and John S. Morgan's **When the Morning Stars Sang Together** are available from the audio-visual centre of the Department of Education and are good source books for origin myths at this age level.

(b) Have students compile a number of such origin myths and perhaps illustrate different versions. Tie this discussion to whatever culture realm you are studying. Have students discuss some of the unique characteristics of creation stories.

(c) Have students invent a northern myth reflecting aspects of their own environment to explain the origin of winter.

(d) Many early creation myths were the science of the people who told them. The elementary science curriculum discusses scientific explanations of world creation. Have students look for *similarities* between scientific explanations of origins and mythological explanations of origins.

(e) Arrange to have an older person from your community visit the class to discuss creation myths or, if this is not feasible, have students learn stories from their parents or grandparents to tell in class. Students might prepare booklets of local stories or submit them to the **Yukon Indian News** for publication on their children's page.

(f) Have students read or listen to Crow stories to identify Yukon "Pourquoi" tales or explanations for:

(i) why the sun, moon and stars are in the sky (pp. 2-3);

(ii) why a loon's cry sounds like children crying (p. 8);

(iii) why some rocks look like white marble (pp. 9-10);

(iv) why a spruce tree is covered with pitch (p. 10).

For thousands of years, man obtained food only by hunting for it. He had no domesticated animals, planted no seeds and moved a great distance each year to obtain game animals. Not surprisingly, his earliest myths reflected this concern with wild animals. This concern has persisted in all hunting cultures to the present day.

The earliest evidence for what has been called human activity — tool making and weapon making — dates from approximately 600,000 B.C. in Africa at the beginning of the Pleistocene Ice Age. Skeletons of mammals dating from this time show that often tails and heads were severed, evidence which Campbell suggests may represent the earliest form of human ritual.[2]

Filmstrips:
"How Fire Came To Earth" and "First Summer, First Winter" in kit **American Indian Folk Legends. K 279.**

Films available from Media Services, Yukon Regional Library, include:
"Legend of the Raven"
"Our Totem is the Raven"
"The Loon's Necklace"
"Glooskap Country"

Filmstrip "Spirits and Monsters" in kit **The Arctic Through Eskimo Eyes. K 283.**

SOCIAL STUDIES — GRADE 7

The grade 7 curriculum looks at stages of cultural development throughout history, from societies based on hunting, to those based on agriculture, to industrial society. The course looks both at *changes* throughout man's history and *persistence* of cultural themes over time.

Mythology is usually introduced in grade 7, in conjunction with the study of Egypt or Greece. Since teachers are also considering much earlier stages of man's history, it is possible to show the universality and persistence of myth at every stage, from earliest archeological evidence through paleolithic and neolithic developments.

The following pages include some suggestions which teachers may wish to include as part of the general discussion of cultural stages.

Part 1 of this guide argues that, while mythology cannot be explained solely as a product of a physical or material environment, these external circumstances of life do play a part in the questions men ask and the answers they discover. This shows most clearly in the transition from hunting to agriculture.

The earliest clear evidence of fire comes from China in approximately 400,000 B.C. In the Choukoutien Cave, an occupant now known as 'Peking Man' and sometimes called 'Prometheus the Great' built fires in his cave, something his contemporaries in Java did not do.[3] So universal is the origin of fire or 'Prometheus myth' that even at this time in prehistory there may have been ritual as well as practical recognition of fire's importance. Prometheus stole fire for the Greeks, Crow (through chickenhawk) for Indians in the Yukon, Nanabozho for Ojibway, Glooscap for east coast Indians — everywhere the theme is an important one.

Later, from 200,000 to 75,000/25,000 B.C., came Neanderthal Man with his clear evidence of ritual surrounding bears in northern Europe and burials in southern France.

It is Neanderthal's bear rites which are particularly fascinating because of the persistence of circum-polar bear ritual and mythology to the present day (see, for example, the story of 'The Girl and the Grizzly', page 62, and comments in Part 3 of this guide). The first altars, then, were:

> *"Little walls of stone, up to 32 inches high, forming a kind of bin, within which a number of cave-bear skulls had been carefully arranged. Some of these skulls had little stones*

arranged around them; others were set on slabs; one, very carefully placed, had the long bones of a cave-bear placed beneath its snout; another had the long bones pushed through the orbits of its eyes."[4]

The earliest evidence of human burial also comes from Neanderthal, from graves in southern France which date to at least 75,000 B.C. In one grave, two adults and two children were buried; in another, a young man was carefully placed in a sleeping position, and in a third a man in his fifties was buried with shells, flints and animal bones. This early attention to ritual indicates a definite preoccupation with questions about life, death and afterlife.[5]

By the time of the second interglacial period, man had spread from Africa north to Europe, east to southeast Asia and probably to North America where archeological evidence for human habitation has now been pushed back beyond 30,000 years at Old Crow in the northern Yukon.

Cro-Magnon man (30,000 — 10,000 years B.C.) was probably the ancestor of those people who came to the New World. In Europe, he developed elaborate art forms — female figurines, rock carvings and rock paintings. The classic cave paintings are in southern France, but the figurines extend to Lake Baikal and these same people undoubtedly pushed on to North America.[6]

The individual stories told by Ms. Angela Sidney, Mrs. Rachel Dawson and Mrs. Kitty Smith in their book **My Stories Are My Wealth** emphasize the persistence of themes and questions which have intrigued and perplexed hunters for centuries. The well-known myth of the Buffalo Bride on the Plains [7] can be compared with the northern Athapaskan stories of The Boy Who Stayed With Fish, The Girl and The Grizzly, The Dogrib Story or The Man Who Stayed With Groundhog (all in **My Stories Are My Wealth**), indicating some of the central interests of hunters.

The revolution which accompanied the shift from hunting to agriculture, the Neolithic, has been called the greatest revolution of all time. The shift in way of life is clearly reflected in mythology, although themes from hunting mythology *do* persist in agricultural mythologies, particularly in the form of the Trickster.

The two contrasting kinds of mythology represented in North American hunting societies and North American agricultural societies have already been outlined in Part 1. Hunters tended to emphasize an individual quest or voyage in their mythology; planters followed a more communal ceremonial calendar which emphasized an orderly cycle of life and death.

Stories reflecting a shift in emphasis from hunting to planting occur both in the Near East and in North America. The story of how Osiris taught men to plant grains in Egypt is retold in **Deeds of Gods and Heroes**, The North American story of "The Maize Spirit" is retold in **The Book of Myths.** Both these books are prescribed texts for grade 8 and grade 10 English.

By the time Near Eastern civilizations began to flourish, agriculture had permitted settlement in permanent communities, in villages and in towns. While animals were still important, they were less important than the products from soil and the yearly cycles of plant growth and decay. The farmer felt himself to be part of that natural cycle; however, because the environment was unpredictable, complicated rituals had to be followed, mythologically given at the beginning of time by a supernatural deity.

The idea of a deity became fully-fledged in neolithic times. Female goddesses were the first to accompany agriculture — the Babylonian Tiamat and the Greek Gaia were both original mothers of life, similar to, but more elaborate than, the Yukon Animal Mother.[8]

At some point in these cultures, there was a shift from female to male deities and the shift is often described in mythology as a battle. Marduk fought Tiamat in the Near East and he defeated that female goddess. Similarly, the story of Gilgamesh represents the break with a female deity.[9]

By the time of Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations, the mythological emphasis had shifted to the heavens and the action of the planets. The king became the sun and the queen became the moon, or *vice versa*. The local state was seen as the reflection of the heavens, part of the natural order of things. While hunters, too, speculated about the heavens (see the story of 'Star Husband', page 73, or 'Kakasgook', page 109), they were never as preoccupied with the heavens as were agricultural civilizations.

In Greece, earliest farming communities had mother

The following filmstrips from the audio-visual centre illustrate aspects of life in ancient times:

(i) Cavemen and hunters — **FS 1119**
(ii) Farmers and Craftsmen — **FS 1118**
(iii) Life in Ancient Egypt — **FS 1116**
(iv) Life in Ancient Mesopotamia — **FS 1117**
(v) Life in Ancient Greece — **FS 1120**
(vi) Life in Ancient Palestine — **FS 1121**

Films (from Media Services, Yukon Regional Library):
- *(i) Dr. Leaky and the Dawn of Man*
- *(ii) Early American Civilizations*
- *(iii) Monuments to the Dead (tombs and pyramids)*
- *(iv) The Warrior Kings (Assyria)*
- *(v) The Death Pits of Ur (Sumeria)*

Filmstrip "The New People" in kit **Mythology** *examines mythology in ancient and modern cultures —* **K 271.**

deities, but with the Mycenaean and Dorian invasions they were gradually replaced by male deities. The Mycenaean male gods married female goddesses (Zeus and Hera, for example) rather than destroying them as the Babylonian and Hebrew gods had done. The Greeks were the first to see laws as rational, man-made and changeable and, while their myths were regarded as the basis of law, they were aware that they could alter these laws.

Despite the changes from hunting mythology to agricultural mythology, certain themes persisted. The Trickster, described in Part 1 of this guide, is most highly developed in hunting societies. In Egypt, the Trickster persists in Seth (the principle of disorder) but it is balanced by the principle of order in Horus and Osiris.[10]

In Greece, both the Titan Prometheus and the god Hermes are Trickster figures. The Titan Prometheus gave man the gift of fire. Hermes, the irrepressible imp born at dawn, walking by noon and playing tricks all afternoon, is elevated to the level of a god in Greece.[11]

In northern Europe, in Viking myth, he lives on as Odin, a shaman figure who gained wisdom through suffering, and as Loki who represents the malevolent aspects of the Trickster personality.[12]

In summary, then, mythology shows that at all times in history man's ideas about the world reflect both (a) universal questions about origins of the world and how the world works and (b) the local effects of economic and environmental circumstances.

SECONDARY ENGLISH 8 — 12

Some literary themes which may prove useful to a teacher of high school English have been outlined in Part 1 of this guide. Themes of the Hero and the Quest from the symbolic world which characterize all literature occur repeatedly in Athapaskan mythology. Specific examples are discussed in Part 3 in a summary and comment on each story in **My Stories Are My Wealth**.

Ultimately, these stories, and hundreds of others like them in the Yukon and in North America, will become the basis for an Indian literature and art. This is happening now in many parts of North America and it is this creative potential which is a major reason for encouraging students in high school English classes to discover and learn about local mythology.

Following Part 1 of this guide, teachers should be able to identify mythical themes in books currently used in English classes. Comparisons with mythology may be particularly useful in poetry classes since poetry is the most visible mythology of present-day society. The symbols change to fit the modern context, but the industrial symbolism of Hart Crane, the symbolism of the Wasteland in T. S. Eliot, and the clear comparisons of some Athapaskan myths with Yeats' 'Leda and the Swan' or D.H. Lawrence's 'Snake' all deserve study.[13]

The following few pages simply follow headings identified as 'goals' in the new British Columbia curriculum, **English 8 - 12**, and include suggestions of ways in which local Athapaskan mythology can be integrated into English courses.

1. Help Students to Listen Effectively

All oral mythologies can be understood and appreciated best when they are heard rather than read. But, because of dialect and linguistic differences, listening to myths told by older people requires more intense concentration than the usual classroom participation.

Ideally, a teacher would make arrangements to invite an older Native person to class either through someone in class or through the Yukon Indian Cultural Education Society at the Yukon Indian Centre. Students might prepare for such a visit by reading and discussing some of the stories from **My Stories Are My Wealth.** Once some of the themes are familiar, students may find it easier to hear, understand and discuss stories with an older person who knows them.

2. Help Students to Speak Effectively

Myths provide opportunities for effective speaking in a number of ways. Students may discuss aspects of a story they have read or heard as they would any other work of literature. They may be able to learn and then tell other

versions of stories in class or to a small group. They may be able to work in groups to dramatize some of the stories and thereby elaborate aspects of the plot which interest them.

Because oral mythology is more effective when spoken than when written, students should be encouraged to *tell* stories rather than just read them.

John S. Morgan, **When the Morning Stars Sang Together,** The Book Society of Canada Limited, 1974.

Robert Livesay, **Faces of Myth**, Don Mills: Longman Canada Limited, 1975.

See filmstrips and audio tapes in kit **The Great Myths of Greece K 284:**

(i) Introduction to Mythology and the Myth of Narcissus
(ii) Demeter and Persephone
(iii) Phaethon
(iv) Orpheus and Eurydice

3. Encourage Interest in Reading

Numerous books of North American Indian legends have become available in recent years but few reflect northern or Yukon myths or legends. By studying some local myths, students may see parallels with mythologies in other parts of North America and the world. Part 3 of this guide gives further references to North American distribution of individual Yukon stories.

Comparisons between Yukon myths and world myths can readily be made using the prescribed texts in mythology at grades 8 and 10 English levels:

Grade 8

David Creighton, **Deeds of Gods and Heroes,** MacMillan, 1967.

Eth Clifford and Leo Fay, **The Magnificent Myths of Man,** The Book Society of Canada, 1973.

Grade 10

Amy Cruse, **The Book of Myths,** Clarke Irwin and Company, 1972.

Moira Kerr and John Bennett, **Myth**, Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1966.

Marion Ralston, **Comparative Mythology,** D. C. Heath Canada Limited, 1974.

Three other collections of North American myths are available from the audio-visual centre of the Department of Education.

Susan Feldmann, **The Story-Telling Stone,** Dell Publishing Company, 1971.

For advanced students who are interested in reading other northern myths and legends which are similar to the stories told by these ladies, the following articles and books may be consulted at the Yukon Archives or borrowed from the audio-visual centre of the Department of Education. These articles are considerably more academic than the books cited above and would be suitable only for senior students.

Charles Camsell and C. M. Barbeau, "Loucheux Myths", **Journal of American Folklore,** Vol. 28, 1915, pp. 249-257.

Habgood, Thelma T. R., "Indian Legends of Northwestern Canada , by Emile Petitot", **Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology,** 1970, pp. 94-130.

C. J. Keim (ed.), "Kutchin Legends from Old Crow, Yukon Territory", **University of Alaska Anthropological Papers,** Vol. 11, No. 2, 1964, pp. 97-108.

Catharine McClellan, **The Girl Who Married The Bear,** National Museums of Canada, Publications in Ethnology, No. 2, 1970.

"Wealth Woman and Frogs Among the Tagish Indians", **Anthropos**, Vol. 58, 1963, pp. 121-128.

Robert A. McKennan, **The Chandalar Kutchin**, Arctic Institute of North America, Technical Paper No. 7, 1965, pp. 89-154.

Richard Slobodin, "Without Fire: A Kutchin Tale of Warfare, Survival and Vengeance", **Proceedings, Northern Athapaskan Conference, 1971**, Vol. 1, Canadian Ethnology Service, Paper No. 27, National Museums of Canada, 1975, pp. 259-301.

John Swanton, **Tlingit Myths and Texts,** Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin No. 39, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1909.

James Teit, "Kaska Tales", **Journal of American Folklore,** Vol. 30, No. 118, 1917, pp. 427-473.

4. Develop Reading and Study Skills

Students needing remedial reading instruction will follow a specific program but might use some of these stories as supplementary reading.

5. Develop Writing Skills — Sentences, Paragraphs, Essays

There are numerous possibilities for development of writing skills here. Students might record myths told by older Indian men and women, particularly Native students who could work with family members. They might summarize plots to test comprehension. They might create imaginative myths using similar themes.

Advanced students might attempt essays, stories or poems based on the quest theme which runs through so many of these stories.

6. Provide Opportunities for Writing Various Types of Prose

In the same way, students could be asked to write paragraphs or compositions comparing themes in these myths. Advanced students might follow some of the references listed above to compare other versions of Yukon myths.

9. Encourage Enjoyment of Art and Literature, Past and Present

Emphasis on themes in comparative literature can be extended to study of Athapaskan mythology. In this context, students can be encouraged to look at Athapaskan myths comparatively as part of a world literature (see Part 1 of this guide).

10. Increase Knowledge of Self and Society Through Literature

The universal themes expressed in all world literature appear in Athapaskan mythology — origin stories, the deluge, origins of fire, origins of customs, Hero themes, the Quest, the search for solutions to fundamental problems. Again, see Part 1 for elaboration of these themes.

The Yukon Archives contains a number of books and articles about Yukon Indian history. A high school level book on Athapaskan history is currently being prepared by Dr. Catharine McClellan with the support of the Council for Yukon Indians. Links can be made between Athapaskan history, society and mythology.

Students should be able to identify the values expressed in traditional mythologies and compare them with their own.

See filmstrips and tapes in kit **Mythology**, *especially "Mount Olympus" and "Orpheus"* — **K 271.**

7. Improve Listening, Reading and Writing Vocabularies

As the Yukon Native Languages Project develops further, students may be able to learn Athapaskan or Tlingit words and phrases which are essential to stories. In some cases the original meaning is simply lost in the English translation. Students can discuss with older narrators which parts of the stories suffer most in the translation to English.

8. Encourage Examination of Mass Media

The mass media reflect numerous myths or fundamental beliefs in contemporary society. Students could identify some of these myths and examine how they are reinforced by the media — to entertain, to persuade, to sell.

Students could examine their favourite television programs or movies for mythical themes, particularly the Hero, Quest, Monster and Trickster themes already discussed in Part 1. Heroes in contemporary television programs have somewhat different characteristics from Athapaskan myths. What do they reflect about contemporary society? Do they have any characteristics in common with classical or Athapaskan mythical heroes?

11. Increase Knowledge of Literature, Past and Present

Students are expected to have acquired some knowledge of major Greek and Roman myths and legends by the time they have completed secondary school, as well as some knowledge of the Bible as related to other works of English literature. Again, because so many of the themes in Athapaskan mythology are universal, they can be compared with both classical mythology and contemporary literature, and students can be encouraged to make more detailed comparisons on their own. (See Part 1.)

12. Encourage Reading of Literary Works in Depth

Athapaskan mythology, like other literary works, can be appreciated at several levels. At one level these myths are stories which entertain; at another level they may express a moral or justify and validate particular beliefs and institutions; at another level, they provide material for intellectual, philosophical or metaphysical speculation. Myths have different meanings for different individuals. High school students should be encouraged to look for metaphor, allegory and symbolism in these myths (see Parts 1 and 3 of this guide for examples).

13. Increase Knowledge of Canadian Literature

Native histories and legends are an important component of Canadian history and literature, particularly in the North. At one level, Athapaskan legends are one part of a much broader Indian mythology; at another, they are specific to a geography and region. They can be seen as an essential component of the Yukon's past and present.

14. Encourage Expression in a Variety of Genres

By the end of secondary school, students should have had an opportunity to write prose fiction, poetry, drama and to make pictorial or audio-visual presentations. Mythological themes can form the basis for such presentations. Indigenous mythology should give rise to indigenous prose, poetry, fiction and art *by* northerners rather than simply *about* the North.

Filmstrip "The Ballad of King Arthur" in **Mythology** *kit —* **K 271**. *Students might compare hero and villain in this legend with the hero and villain in the movie* **Star Wars.**

Audio Visual Aids: Filmstrips, Cassette Tapes, Films, Records and Video Tapes

The following audio-visual materials related to themes in mythology, legend, fable and fairy tale are available from the audio-visual centre in the Department of Education. Films are available from the film library of the Yukon Regional Library. The catalogue number listed with each item should be used when requesting material.

KITS:

1. The Great Myths of Greece: K284
Kit includes filmstrips, cassette tapes and teacher's manual
(a) An Introduction to Greek Mythology
(b) Demeter and Persephone
(c) Orpheus and Eurydice
(d) Phaeton

2. Mythology: K 271

Includes filmstrips, tapes and manual (grades 6 to 10-plus)
(a) The New People
(b) Mount Olympus
(c) Orpheus
(d) The Ballad of King Arthur

3. Folklore and Fable: K 273

Includes filmstrips, tapes and manual (grades 6 to 10-plus)
(a) Magic and Superstition
(b) Pecos Bill
(c) Dracula
(d) Folk Music

4. The Future: K 276

Includes Filmstrips, tapes and manual
(a) Things to Come
(b) A Martian Chronicle
(c) Brave New World
(d) Science Fiction and the Future

5. Folk Tales from the Old World: K 277

Includes filmstrip and tapes
(a) The Little House
(b) Seven With One Blow
(c) The Foxy Wisdom
(d) The Unselfish Prisoners of the Sea

6. Tales from the Treetops: K 278

Includes filmstrips, tape cassettes, about Indian and Inuit legends
(a) In The Beginning
(b) The Story of Greedy Pan
(c) The Hunter Who Went Away
(d) Why the Blackfeet Never Hurt a Mouse

7. The Arctic Through Eskimo Eyes: K 283

Includes filmstrips, tape casettes
(a) My Escape From Death
(b) The Way Things Used To Be
(c) Spirits and Monsters
(d) The Way We Live Today

8. Folktale Series I: K 291

Includes two filmstrips, two tape cassettes
(a) My Mother is the Most Beautiful Woman in the World — a Ukranian folktale
(b) The Wave — a Japanese folktale

9. Folktale Series II: K 292

Includes filmstrips, cassette tapes (primary level)
(a) In the Morning Early (a cumulative counting tale)
(b) Just Say Hi! (A Turkish folktale; useful in language arts program)

10. The Ancient World: K 286

Kit includes filmstrip and manual (suitable for grade 7)
(a) The Land of Two Rivers: Sumer, Assyria, Babylon and Persia
(b) Egypt: The Gift of the Nile
(c) The Origins of European Civilization: Crete, Mycenae and Greece
(d) Rome and Her Empire

11. American Indian Folk Legends: K 279

Kit includes filmstrips and tapes
(a) The White Buffalo
(b) First Winter, First Summer
(c) The First Tom-Tom
(d) How Fire Came to the Earth
(e) The Four Thunders, Part I
(f) The Four Thunders, Part II

12. American Indian Cultures: Plains and Woodland: K 287

(a) The Boyhood of Lone Raven
(b) The Young Manhood of Coyote
(c) The Young Manhood of Quick Otter
(d) The Travels of Quick Otter
(e) Flamingo: Princess of the Natchez
(f) The Journey of the Flamingo Princess

13. American Indians of the North Pacific Coast: K 281

(a) See especially filmstrip and tape called 'Myths and Ceremonies'

14. Holidays, Histories and Legends: K 285

Includes tapes on Christmas Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Halloween, St. Valentine's Day, New Year's Day.

15. Why Cultures Are Different: K 280

(a) See especially filmstrip number 6, 'Religion'.

16. Heroes, Villains and True Love Conquers: PR 247

A survey of the melodrama in English literature, suitable for grades 8 to 12.

FILM STRIPS:

1. Our Native People, Customs and Legends: Native Games **FS 1123**
2. Living Before History: Cave Men and Hunters **FS 1119**
3. Life in Ancient Mesopotamia **FS 1117**
4. Life in Ancient Greece **FS 1120**
5. Life in Ancient Egypt **FS 1116**
6. Life in Ancient Palestine **FS 1121**
7. Life in Ancient America **FS 1124**
8. Farmers and Craftsmen **FS 1118**
9. The Wolf and The Wolverine (in Walt Disney, White Wilderness Series) **K 282**

AUDIO-TAPES AND RECORDS:

1. Music of the Alaskan Kutchin Indians. Folkways Record (music closely related to that of Yukon Indians, including Crow Dance Songs, Medicine Songs, The Boy in the Moon). **PR 320**

The following tapes and records are described in the Department of Education Media Catalogue:

2. Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths (3 cassettes, intermediate level) **SAC 8001, 8002 and 8003**
3. The Fables of Aesop (620-560 B.C.) **SAC 7003**
4. Homer, The Iliad **PR 32**
5. The Iliad and Odyssey of Homer **PR 45**
6. Canadian Indian Folk Lore **PR 83**
7. Indian Songs of Today **PR 87**

FILMS: (Available from the Film Library, Yukon Regional Library)

The following films are all available from the Yukon Regional Library:

1. The Boy and the Mouse (7½ min., colour)
2. Beaver Dam (16 min., colour) — teachers might use this film in conjunction with stories of Beaverman

Filmstrip "Dracula" in kit **Folklore and Fable**. *Discuss the idea of Monsters in myth.* **K 273**

3. Dr. Leaky and the Dawn of Man (29 min., colour)
4. Early American Civilizations (15 min., black and white)
5. Eskimo Artist — Kenojuak (19 min., colour)
6. Glooskap Country (14 min., colour)
7. Haida Carver (12 min., colour)
8. Jack and the Beanstalk (16 min., colour)
9. Legend of the Raven (15 min., colour)
10. Paddle to the Sea (28 min., colour)
11. Circle of the Sun (29 min., colour)
12. The Warrior Kings (28 min., black and white)
13. Into the Labyrinth (28 min., black and white)
14. The Death Pits at Ur (28 min., black and white)
15. Monuments to the Dead (28 min., black and white)
16. The Loon's Necklace (11 min., colour)
17. Our Totem is the Raven
18. The Owl and the Lemming (6 min., colour)
19. Three Fox Fables (11 min., black and white)

References — Part 2

[1]See John S. Morgan, **When the Morning Stars Sang Together,** The Book Society of Canada Ltd., Agincourt, 1974. This book is available from the audio-visual centre, Department of Education.

[2]Campbell, **Primitive Mythology,** pp. 359-360.

[3]This famous Peking Man was found in 1929 by a Chinese archeologist and still shows the earliest firm evidence of human fire building. However, in 1976 archeologist Richard Leaky reported a nearly complete skull of the same species, *homo erectus*, nearly one-and-a-half-million years old, evidence which suggests that 'Prometheus' may well date much earlier than the 400,000 base date.

[4]Ibid., p. 341.

[5]Ibid., p. 342.

[6]Ibid., p. 375.

[7]David Creighton, **Deeds of Gods and Heroes,** MacMillan, 1967, p. 15.

[8]Compare their stories in **Deeds of Gods and Heroes,** Chapters 5 and 7.

[9]Ibid., chapter 6.

[10]Ibid., chapter 4.

[11]Ibid., page 65.

[12]Ibid., chapter 18.

[13]For these and other examples, see Louis Dudek, ed., **Poetry of Our Time,** the MacMillan Company, Toronto, 1966. This volume is used in senior English classes.

3 MY STORIES ARE MY WEALTH: A GUIDE TO THEMES

(Stories by Mrs. Angela Sidney, Mrs. Kitty Smith and Mrs. Rachel Dawson. Published by The Council for Yukon Indians, 1977)

The British Columbia Curriculum prescribes five books of myths at grades 8 and 10 levels (see Part 2 of this guide). Because very few North American Indian myths are included in these books, several teachers have suggested that **My Stories Are My Wealth** might give Yukon teachers a selection of Yukon myths for classroom study.

This section provides some general notes on story themes which may help teachers approach stories at different grade levels. The notes also suggest some other areas in North America where the same stories are told, putting them into a broader comparative context. While some stories — particularly ones about how Crow made the world, how man got fire, how man got lake fish — may be enjoyable at lower grade levels; others may be more suitable at a high school level. Any well-told story can be appreciated at various levels, depending on the age and maturity of the listener: as pure enjoyment, as moral teaching, as philosophy or as metaphysics.[1] The teacher can choose the appropriate framework depending on the class.

The background to **My Stories Are My Wealth** is described in its introduction and in the preface to this guide. It was not written as a textbook but it is a source book which gives an idea of some of the popular stories still told in the Yukon. The following thematic guide may give teachers a more rapid reference to themes in the stories than would reading and studying each story.

The stories were recorded and written in English and consequently many of the nuances and linguistic skills are lost in translation. While this is a real limitation, there is validity in studying English versions. In the first place, many young Indian people do not speak an Indian language and would hear English versions of the stories anyway; secondly, the overall structural arrangements of the stories probably do not change a great deal when translated to another language. It should be recognized, however, that ideally stories would be told in the Indian language.

These stories were written as they were recorded and are not rewritten or edited. Too often sacred and traditional myths from all cultures are rewritten by outsiders who try to popularize them for children; when this is done, much of the original meaning is lost — probably a good deal more than is lost in translation from one language to another. While the grammar and sentence structure in these stories may not follow textbook English, any editing of that kind would further alter the style of the narrator. In any event, ideas about use of dialect change: one hundred years ago, **Uncle Tom's Cabin** was banned in northern United States schools because it did not follow standard English.

In a number of cases, two versions of a particular story are given. In her excellent monograph **The Girl Who Married The Bear**, Catharine McClellan suggests that Yukon story tellers were not as rigidly bound by format as in some other areas of North America and that individual narrators had considerable leeway in telling stories, depending on their talent as narrators and the themes they wished to stress. No one version is any more 'correct' than another, and people in other communities will undoubtedly be able to provide further variations of each.

It cannot be over-emphasized that these stories are much more than one-dimensional fairy tales about animals and men. As McClellan explains, the popular Athapaskan myths have the same psychological and social power as does a good play or novel in western society. In re-telling the story, a good narrator elaborates the dramatic episodes which have personal psychological appeal for the narrator.[2] Just as the best literature can be read on more than one level, so can these myths.

Finally, an Athapaskan art and literature will develop in the Yukon just as it has in other parts of North America. Jaxon Beardy, Carl Ray and Norval Morriseau are already translating oral tribal literature into some of the most creative art in Canada at the present time, and a similar trend will undoubtedly take place in poetry and literature. When it does, it will come from the children who are now in schools and they will rely on the themes in stories told by their own grandparents.

The following notes are a guide only and are written for teachers, not for students. There is no 'correct' approach to myth, but this provides one framework within which myth can be examined.

Crow Stories[3]

Some aspects of the Trickster theme in North American mythology are discussed in Part 1 of this guide.

Many of the Crow stories in the Yukon are similar to Raven stories on the Pacific northwest coast, though coastal versions usually give the creation parts of the story an inland setting. In fact, Raven myths occur throughout much of the

polar region west through Alaska and through much of northeast Asia.[4]

The theme of a woman swallowing something and becoming pregnant is a common one in many early mythologies. There are some clear parallels between the Greek Prometheus myth[5]. and Crow's early exploits. Prometheus stole fire from the gods for the benefit of mankind; Crow stole the sun, moon and stars from a man who hoarded them and shared them with the first animal people.

The chronology of creation is not entirely clear. A large part of Crow's creative role was to make the world suitable for animal and human life. This story stresses Crow's role in creating animals, but another popular story in southern Yukon is that of Animal Mother who gave birth to all animals.[6] The episode of diving for sand to make the world is discussed earlier in this guide, in Part 1.

At the time when Crow made people, he set in motion a social order which still persists. All people in the southern Yukon are divided into two groups or 'halves', sometimes called moieties by anthropologists (after the French 'half'). These two groups are named Crow and Wolf. The society is matrilineal — that is, each child is automatically born into his or her mother's lineage and the rights and obligations of that group are passed through the female line. By custom, it is wrong for members of either group to inter-marry; thus, as Crow explained, "Crow must marry Wolf and Wolf must marry Crow." (See activity suggested on page 28 of this guide.)

The first part of the cycle stresses Crow's creative aspects, but there is another, more selfish and even malevolent, side to Crow.

Two of the Trickster's characteristics throughout North America are (a) lust for women and (b) desire to get food without working for it.[7] Crow thought that he had found an ideal combination in Fish Mother, but his anti-social nature got the better of him and she left him without food. In a coastal Tlingit story, Crow put a woman in charge of the tides just as he had made Fish Mother control the tides in this story.[8]

But Crow can also be malevolent. On one occasion, he creates a brother out of driftwood solely to work for him and then steals the fish and grease they had prepared together.[9] Another time, he talks Deer into being his brother, then tricks him into falling into a canyon so he can eat his fat.[10] He also has adults patch canoes with grease, and then he licks it off, drowning the children in the canoes.

Crow can also be manipulated by his greed. One time, he sees a pretty green blanket floating out to sea and he is so eager to get it that he throws away his old gopher blanket before discovering that he has been looking at seaweed. This is one part of the Crow cycle where the song is an important part of the story and a written version is especially pale.

The story of Crow's talking eye can be drawn out at great length, and has parallels with the theme of 'The Boy Who Cried Wolf' in European tales. It is frequently told to amuse young children.

Crow's descent to the belly of the whale is one of the universal myths familiar to many world traditions. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, it is Jonah who was swallowed by a whale. In Greek mythology, Hercules was swallowed by a sea monster which was harrassing Troy; he was able to kill the monster from inside. The Polynesian Maui was swallowed by his great-grandmother, and the entire Greek pantheon of gods (except Zeus) was swallowed by Cronus.[11] The same story is told by Inuit in a longer version.[12] The theme of being swallowed by a large sea animal is usually interpreted as a ritual death and rebirth.

In the story of how Crow brought fire to men, the ambiguous nature of Crow's personality is clear — Crow is given credit for bringing fish to men but in reality it was Chickenhawk who ran all the risks and lost his beak.

The story of how Crow brought fresh fish (lake fish) to man is very similar to the Tlingit and Inuit stories of how Raven brought fresh *water* to man. In those stories, petrel or loon trapped him, smoked him black, but finally let him go with water in his beak.

Crow shows his Trickster qualities most clearly when he claims to have had a dream or heard a prophesy that war will come.[13] But Crow can be tricked himself in various ways; for example, when meat and fish come to life and run away from him after he has dried them.

Ultimately, Crow is described by women narrators as someone likeable in most ways but not entirely trustworthy. It may be that men narrating the same stories would give quite a different emphasis to his adventures.

Beaverman Stories[14]

Beaverman, or Smart Beaver, has all the characteristics of the mythical hero described earlier in this guide in Part 1. He comes from a mythological time when the distinction between animals and humans was less rigid. He is a human being but he can change into a beaver when the situation requires. He leaves his familiar surroundings and goes off to kill a series of monsters — giant men and animals — which are terrorizing people on the Yukon River. He undergoes dangerous ordeals, uses his wits to outwit the giants and monsters he meets, and ultimately makes the Yukon River safe for human beings.

The Kaska Indians call him *Tsuguya*.[15] The Kutchin equivalent is *A-to-tco-kai-yo*.[16] The Southern Tutchone call him *Ets'uya'*, the Tlingit *Gediyedi*, the Tagish *Cha'kwaza*.[17] But everywhere, his voyage is similar.

Beaverman's journeys are a paleolithic odyssey. The individual episodes are sometimes told as independent

stories; for example, the Sun Story[18] is sometimes included in versions of the Beaverman story, and some of Beaverman's adventures are told as separate stories by other tribes.

A number of Beaverman's adventures were recorded in 1915 as they were told by two Kaska Indians at Dease Lake.[19] Some episodes are the same as those told by Mrs. Sidney and Mrs. Smith, but there are also additional episodes about Bushtail Rat Man and Woodchuck Man in the Kaska versions.

The giant men and animals Beaverman meets represent the forces which terrorized people in mythological time. They each have characteristic attributes.

Giant men in Yukon myths do not seem to be very intelligent and are feared more for their strength than for their wits. An intelligent human being, even a child as we see later, can foil a giant.[20]

The woman who tanned human skins along the river is usually Mink Woman or Otter Woman in Athapaskan mythology. Otter and mink have magically dangerous association, particularly for women; otter is believed to drive people insane.[21] Variations of this story had been recorded for 17 North American Indian tribes by the early part of this century.[22]

In the similar Kutchin version of A-to-tco-kai-yo, the hero meets Otter Woman at the mouth of the Klondike River; he discovers that the source of her evil comes from the fact that she is possessed by Mink and drives Mink away.[23]

In Part 1, there was some discussion of how ordinary reality is often reversed in northern Athapaskan myth. Here, Mink Lady tans human skins — the reverse of the present social order.

At the beginning of time, culture heroes instructed the animals and people they met about how to behave, part of the task of making the world safe for humanity. This is clear in Beaver's meeting with the man who was eating Otter. By contrast, a number of the later stories describe situations where ordinary mortals were taken away to the animal world and instructed how to behave by animals, knowledge which they were able to bring back to their communities.

The episode of Beaverman and Wolverine is widely known in the northern Yukon and Alaska where it is told as an independent story of Wolverine and man.[24] In the southeast Yukon, it is usually the first and most important part of Beaver's voyage. It is also told by Bella Coola Indians and by Inuit.[25]

The initial episode of the Bear story involves Beaverman sending his moccasins to Bear's daughter to mend. When a young Athapaskan woman reached puberty, she was secluded for a period away from people and was taught to do women's work. During this time, the girl would be expected to mend and sew for the entire camp, so Beaver could reasonably expect that she would repair his moccasins. Because Bear was just bluffing, he had to sew them himself.

The rest of the plot in the Bear episode follows the standard theme of a young man petitioning an older man to marry his daughter (even though in this case Beaverman had no intention of marrying Bear's daughter). The idea of 'trials' is very common in folk literature, from the labours of the Greek Hercules to the Athapaskan 'Sun Story' or the tests the Ojibwa Wemicus forced on his sons-in-law.[26] In the story of Beaverman, they reflect some of the tension between father-in-law and son-in-law in a society where a young husband always moved to his wife's parents' home for at least a year after marriage, to 'work for' those parents.

The episode in which the hero kills the giant Eagles and reduces them to present day size is also common. Similar versions occur in the Hare Indian 'Wise One' myths and the Dogrib story of "The Man Who Walked About The Sky" as recorded in what is now the Northwest Territories by Emile Petitot in 1886.[27]

The final episode where Beaverman meets Sheep is also familiar in southern Yukon. Sheep's wife attracts victims by barking like a dog. When someone stops to look for her, Sheep pushes him over the edge and his wife clubs anyone not killed outright by the fall. Beaverman tricks her into killing her husband.

The underlying theme in all these episodes is the way in which a hero with power reduced the giant animals to their present size, thereby making the world safe for human beings.

Two Smart Brothers[28]

This is another cycle of stories sometimes intermeshed with the Smart Beaver tales. A few people say that they are all the same story, that Beaverman started out with his brother and that each planned to circle the world going in a different direction. The theme of twin heroes or brother heroes is also common among Navaho and Inuit.[29]

The story cycle of the Smart Brothers clearly dramatizes the classic journey of the mythical hero or heroes. There is a clear *separation*, a long *initiation* where the brothers experience new aspects of themselves and of life, and a *return* where they come back to rejoin society.

North American creation myths generally dramatize two aspects of creation:

(1) how the world is made fit for human beings;

(2) how human beings are made fit for the world.

While Smart Beaver or Beaverman stories generally dramatize the first theme, the Two Smart Brothers tends to dramatize the second. They meet people, teach them to be human, then use their new knowledge to get safely home.

The episode with the Giant Buffalo is particularly interesting because there is evidence that Buffalo lived in the ex-

treme eastern part of the Yukon during the last century, particularly in the Liard drainage and perhaps on the upper Pelly area.[30]

The episode about the giant is sometimes told as part of the Smart Beaver cycle.[31] A giant with a head full of mosquitoes is also common,[32] though other stories say that mosquitoes came from the head of Wolverine when Beaverman killed him, and that this is where mosquitoes inherited their man-eating tendencies.

Reference to a spirit helper named 'Grandma' is common in North American myth; usually such a helper is disguised as a mouse or a shrew, in this case as a chipmunk.

The return or reconciliation is an important part of the heroic journey because the hero must be re-integrated into the community. Usually there is disbelief that he could have returned, followed by recognition of some distinguishing feature, in this case his mitts.

The Boy Who Stayed With Fish[33]

The two versions of this story in **My Stories Are My Wealth** follow the classic pattern of a mythical journey. There is a period of separation where the hero is taken from his normal everyday context, an initiation during which he is instructed in new knowledge about the fish (salmon) world, and a return when he brings back his new knowledge to people.

The separation initially occurs because the boy has made a fatal blunder: he insulted Fish by calling it mouldy. This is a common way for the journey to begin.

Initiation leads to a whole new way of seeing things; it is painful and lonely, but necessary. As in all animal worlds, the fish world is reversed from the everyday world. Human fish traps become fish 'war houses'; fish eggs are considered excrement to fish; swimming is 'canoeing', and the boy becomes 'Mouldy-head'. The protagonist is made to see how limited was his former perspective.

The return is typically difficult. The boy is recognized by a copper neckband he still wears as a fish (like the mitts worn by the boy in the last story); but the return must be slow. It takes a shaman and several days of fasting and ritual by the whole community to bring him back. This gradual staging of the return to camp life is common to many stories. Sometimes the complete return cannot be made and the hero never fully returns.[34] If successful, the returning hero brings valuable new knowledge which becomes a guiding principle and thereby benefits everyone. This boy is able to teach proper ritual for killing salmon.

From that time on, then, whenever people have killed salmon they have participated in a timeless ritual first taught by this boy. In other words, hunting and fishing are not just economic activities; they are ways of recreating an important event from mythological time.

This is an excellent example for any teacher with senior grades wanting to examine one myth in depth because it illustrates so many points made in the introduction to this guide. Two other versions were recorded in Sitka and Wrangell in 1904. They can be ordered from the audio-visual centre of the Department of Education by anyone wanting to compare four versions of one story.[35]

The Man Who Stayed With Groundhog[36]

These two versions of the 'Man Who Stayed With Groundhog' show the same classic patterns as the preceding story — separation, initiation, return — and can be interpreted as a psychological or shamanistic journey. A man mistreats Groundhog and is enticed away to another world. His family can see him and in one version they call and call him, but he cannot hear them.

While the previous story, 'The Boy Who Stayed With Fish', concentrates on the boy's initiation into the fish world and the reversed states of knowledge he acquires there, the action in the Groundhog story stresses the efforts of the man's family to bring him back to the world of community — through ritual fasting, continence, etc.

A second common theme emerges here, in that the youngest brother, who is considered 'foolish' in one version, is the only brother who is ritually pure enough to bring his brother back from the other world (underworld).

Again, in Mrs. Sidney's version, the process of re-integration to the community is slow and involves eight days of singing and fasting. Gradually, the man is able to return to teach people the proper ritual for killing groundhog. Like the previous story, this story emphasizes that, while hunting may appear to be primarily an economic activity, in fact it involves re-enacting an important event.

The Dogrib Story[37]

A version of this same story was told by a Dogrib Indian man, Yetta-netal, at Great Bear Lake in 1866 where it was recorded by Emile Petitot.[38] Swanton recorded versions at Wrangell and Sitka, Alaska, in 1904.[39] Teit recorded a similar version of 'The Dog-man and Dog Children' at Dease Lake (northern British Columbia) in 1915 and listed more than

twenty North American tribes where similar versions had been recorded by that year.[40]

This version begins as did the two preceding stories: a girl insults a dog and is later approached by a dog disguised as a handsome young man who entices her away. While the protagonists in the two preceding stories seem to acquiesce in the initiation, this girl rebels when she realizes what has happened and kills her dog husband.

She returns to her family on her own, but her return cannot be smooth because she bears eight pups; that is, she is still separate from normal life and has brought back not new knowledge but the distortion which results from an uncompleted journey. She discovers that her dog children do periodically turn into human beings and one day surprises them and 'fixes' them in this state.

At puberty, all Athapaskan women were secluded for a time and were forbidden to see any men, even brothers. When the dog daughter reaches puberty and is secluded, she accidentally sees her brothers and her gaze turns them to stone.

An obvious lesson, still observed by older women, is that girls should not step over dogs. At another level, it may be seen as the fundamental tragedy which may accompany an uncompleted mythical journey. The girl-wife-mother did not bring back new knowledge as did the two previous protagonists from fish world and groundhog world; she only brought bad luck for herself and her family. Its widespread popularity in North America indicates that it carries a fundamental message.

The Girl and the Grizzly[41]

There is another different story of 'The Girl Who Married The Bear' which is discussed in its many variations in Catharine McClellan's excellent monograph by the same name.[42] She recorded different versions of the same story and showed how individual story-tellers elaborate aspects of a story which make most sense of their own personal psychological and social situation. Teachers wanting to examine one book in depth would do well to examine this book, available at the Yukon Archives or from the audio-visual centre at the Department of Education.

The emphasis on bear ceremonialism is worth noting in any discussion of northern mythology:

> *"Vestiges of a circum-polar paleolithic cult of the bear have been identified throughout the arctic, from Finland and Northern Russia, across Siberia and Alaska to Labrador and Hudson Bay: among the Finns and Lapps, Ostyaks and Vogul, Orotchi of the Amur River region, Gilyaks, Goldi and peoples of Kamchatka, the Nootka, Tlingit, Kwakiutl and others of the Northwest American Coast, and the Algonquins of the Northeast."*[43]

This continuum also extends back in time at least 75,000 years, there being clear evidence of bear ceremonialism in the caves of Neanderthal man who erected altars surrounded by carefully arranged bear skulls. In the Yukon, rituals involved in bear hunting are usually traced to the story of the girl and bear-husband.

The structure of the story is standard for all versions, but it is the return of the heroine which is dramatized in the version told by Mrs. Sidney.

A girl becomes separated from other women while she is out picking berries; she is approached by a handsome man who begins helping her to pick the berries. As they travel, he 'fixes' her mind so that she loses her sense of ordinary time and enters mythical time. They travel for four days, which are really four years, but he seems to be eating all the berries they collect. They reach his camp and his people, and eventually she discovers the truth — that this is a bear camp — but she is unable to escape until one day she meets her aunt who had disappeared many years earlier.

There are two ways a hero or heroine can return to everyday life: rescue from outside, as in the case of the 'Man Who Stayed With Groundhog', or self-rescue. In this case, the heroine makes her own way back in what is commonly known in mythology as the 'Magic Flight'. The aunt arms her niece with amulets to throw behind her as obstacles when she flees: buttercup stems and tree tops, which grow into forests when she throws them behind her. This motif also appears in Grimm's European folk tales. Campbell suggests that, on a symbolic level, these amulets thrown behind in the flight can be seen as protective interpretations and rationalizations by which people protect themselves.[44]

She reaches a lake and joins a man who is in a similar predicament. He has been taken and held prisoner by Frog Woman. With considerable difficulty, they kill Frog Woman and escape. Ultimately, they return to her people.

This is a more complete journey than the one made by the woman in the Dogrib Story (described above) and it may explain the more satisfactory ending from the perspective of the heroine.

The Sun Story[45]

This story is frequently told as one of the Beaverman episodes in southern Yukon.

The hero is unhappily married and wanders off from his group to 'starve someplace' when he is met by a mouse who appears as a little old lady, a 'grandma' helper as in the earlier story of the Two Smart Brothers. In many North American tribes, the mouse is considered to be a wise old woman and people go to her to ask advice. She is not unlike the fairy godmother in European tales. She feeds the hero and gives him protective amulets to help him on his way. Using these gifts, he climbs to the sky and meets the Sun's daughters.

The Sun, considering this prospective son-in-law, sets him four trials, just as Bear set four trials for Beaverman. (In the Dease Lake version, the two stories are actually told as one — the Sun and the Giant Bear being identical.) Because of his magic amulets, the man succeeds and marries one daughter.

Eventually, though, he wants to see his people and with the Sun's help he begins a complicated return. The Sun gives his daughter a special feather. Each day she must ask her husband to bring her water, the Sun tells her; if the feather comes out dry, all is well; if wet, her husband has been unfaithful to her. None of the hero's people can see his Sun Ray wife, but all goes well until one day he meets his former wife and the Sun Ray's feather comes out wet when she dips it in the water. She flees, and her father burns the village to avenge her honour. Her husband still has one of his 'grandma's gifts', a piece of ice, and saves himself by clinging to it. He ultimately returns to his Sun wife.

Continuing the analogy of the journey, one psychological message may be that if you make the mythical journey and go so far as to bring back new knowledge to the group and *then* revert to old habits, you run the risk of losing everything. The mythical journey cannot be a temporary diversion in life; it must involve a total re-interpretation of how the world works and it must be reflected in behaviour.

On a social level, this story reflects tensions between sons-in-law and fathers-in-law, and also some of the problems a young woman must face when she goes to live with her husband's people. Although a man customarily moved to his wife's family for at least a year after marriage, eventually they might return to his people.

Star Husband[46]

This story is distributed very widely over North America. In 1917, Teit listed 20 tribes where the story was told[47] and in 1953 the folklorist Stith Thompson compared 86 versions then known north of Mexico.[48]

As in the last story, the quest leads the heroines to another world, in this case a sky world. As it begins, two girls are talking at night, wishing that they might marry two stars they select. In the morning, they find themselves in the sky world with their two star husbands.

Their husbands are good hunters but, from the beginning, the girls miss their parents. The rest of the story deals with their attempts to return home. They tan a great supply of babiche rope, make many pairs of mitts, dig a hole in the sky and climb back to earth.

The two versions told here have two different endings, one in which Wolverine plays a part and one in which he doesn't. Significantly, in Stith Thompson's lengthy analysis, the Wolverine sequence frequently appears, but not frequently enough to be considered part of what he calls the 'core' story. He concludes that any endings are developed regionally and do not affect the main core of the story, which consists of the girls' ascent to the sky and descent home.

In the Dease Lake version told to Teit, a significant part of the flight involves outwitting Wolverine. They meet a man and promise to pay him with porcupine garters if he lets Wolverine fall into the river. (This may explain the reference to garters in Mrs. Sidney's version.)

Anyone interested in a detailed analysis of this story might read Stith Thompson's article available at the Yukon Archives (see bibliography for full reference).

Good Luck Lady[49]

The significance of this myth lies in its attempt to link historical events with mythical themes. The distinction is significant. Traditionally, secular events were considered to be of little consequence; the only really important acts involved repeating the patterns already established in mythological time. Consequently, all regular human activities from hunting and fishing to child-rearing followed regular patterns already set out in mythical time.

In 1896, the discovery of Klondike gold brought cataclysmic changes to the lives of Yukon Indians; and the fact that Indians discovered the gold which touched off the strike had to be explained in some ways that made sense.

The story pattern here is somewhat different from the preceding stories because it takes this extra step, linking historical time with mythological time.

The first segment occurs in mythological time. A man marries a lake woman. His partner tries to visit her, but she sends him away and her children follow him, kill him and destroy his village. They spare their father and one other woman. She becomes Good Luck Lady or Wealth Woman. Anyone who hears her child cry will become wealthy if he

follows a certain ritual. Her brother, too, has power to bestow wealth.

From then on, the story is set in historical, secular time. Individuals who have heard Good Luck Lady and acted appropriately (like Skookum Jim) have become rich. Those who acted inappropriately remained poor. McClellan suggests that this story has helped people to explain some of the cataclysmic events which took place in the Yukon in 1898. It helped maintain some form of order while they began to develop another more secular framework for understanding the changes which were occurring.[50] In that sense, it has served the function of all myth, linking the temporal secular, changing, historical world with the eternal cosmos or 'myth time' which, prior to the goldrush, was the absolute standard for 'real time'.[51]

Animal Mother[52]

With Animal Mother, we return again to the origin myths similar to Crow and Beaverman cycles. This myth explains how Animal Mother gave birth to all the important Yukon animals. The Tahltan Indians in northern British Columbia tell the same stories of 'Meat Mother'.[53] The myth has parallels with the northern European fertility myths of planting cultures.

The mountains which Animal Mother used for the four supports for her trampoline can be pointed out near Carcross.

Mrs. Smith's account begins with a story which is sometimes told independently. Two women had a stingy husband who used to eat fat female porcupines alone in the bush rather than bring any home to his wives. One woman had porcupine power and caused a female porcupine to bite his upper lip and hang on until he repented. The shame of his stinginess is a lesson to everyone.[54]

Mrs. Smith also tells an episode at the end of her version of Animal Mother, similar in outline to the 'Boy Who Stayed With Fish'. A man who mistreated game was taken away and instructed by Game Mother about how to treat animals. He returned to remind other people (in her own grandfather's time) that appropriate rituals for game must still be carried out. In this way, the story of Game Mother both explains origins and continues to instruct.

The First Potlatch[55]

The setting for this story is said to be Klukwan, Alaska. It is also said to explain some of the traditional tension between coast and interior Indians because the main figure in the story, a coastal Tlingit woman, was raising a worm as a weapon of war against interior people. In coastal versions of the story, the worm is called a woodworm.[56]

At another level, this story explains the origin of the funeral potlatch. One theory of myth links myth with ritual and suggests that the 'purpose' of all myth is to explain why and how specific rituals are carried out. While this is simply not always true, 'The First Potlatch' is one clear example where myth suggests origins of a ritual still practised. At potlatches, or parties as they are now called, traditional social rules come into play. Crow and Wolf moieties, established by Crow at the beginning of time, each have obligations to one another. A song from this story is still sung at potlatches in the southern Yukon.

The Woman Who Was Taken Away[57]

This is a variation on what Slobodin has called the 'Prize Woman' theme. A woman, usually beautiful and a capable worker, is stolen and her husband tries to find her.[58] It is a theme which echoes the Greek Orpheus myth: the husband follows his wife to another world which is cut off from the everyday world, and tries to rescue her.

First, the woman is taken by a man who taunts her husband. The husband follows, but suddenly the wife and her abductor disappear to another world. A point of land in the lakes lifts up and they go underneath it to a world where, typically, ordinary reality is reversed and it is immediately winter.

The story focuses on the rescue. Her husband gathers his brothers-in-law and they set out to find her. After a difficult journey, they meet her, enlist her help and kill everyone in the camp.

This tale involves considerable suspense and adventure and undoubtedly reflects some of the tensions which led to warfare traditionally.

The Boy Who Was Taken Away[59]

This story was included as one episode of the Beaverman stories at Dease Lake in 1915.[60] The pattern is similar to that of other journeys. It is also described as one of the adventures of the culture hero Jateaquoint of the Chandalar Kutchin in north-central Alaska.[61]

Two brothers are hunting and accidentally encounter a giant who challenges them to come with him. One refuses; as a consequence, he is walled up in a cave and never heard from again. The lesson is that, once one is 'called to adventure', it is necessary to carry on with the journey.

His brother travels with the giant in a world where, predictably, everything is reversed. The giant calls rabbit 'moose' and, while the boy eats a whole rabbit for a meal, the giant is full before he finishes the head. The next day the giant kills a moose which he calls a 'rabbit'; he eats the whole animal while the boy scarcely manages to finish a jawbone. The giant kills a muskrat which he calls a 'louse' in his hair, and so on.

They cross a lake where it is winter on the other side as they travel farther and farther from everyday reality. The war with the giants is violent and ugly, but the protagonist survives. In psychological terms, he conquers his own monsters.

The giant gives him amulets to protect him on his way home. When he reaches home, he sends his sister to warn his parents and thereby minimize the shock of his return.

The Girl With Two Husbands"

In other versions of this story, the girl usually climbs the tree and turns into an owl.[43] But whatever the sequence, owls are universally regarded as shamans or 'doctors' in the southern Yukon.

This story may reflect some of the tension which can arise in a matrilocal society; that is, a society where a young man moves to his wife's camp and lives with her parents when he marries. It was not uncommon for a woman to have two husbands, particularly in northern Yukon.

The Story of Kakasgook"

This is the most obvious coastal Tlingit story in the book. A coastal version was recorded in 1909[44], and it stressed the navigational aspects of the story, important to the seagoing Tlingits.

The hero receives an omen that he should remain at home and not go seal hunting. He is an excellent hunter and it is hard for him to stay away from the sea. After many months, he breaks down and borrows a boat from his brother-in-law. He plans a short trip with his eight nephews. No sooner do they leave than a wind blows up. They try to get back but are blown away and tossed around for two days; then they are blown on to an island and make camp. Every day, the hero observes the movement of the sun and, when it reaches its most northerly point, he knows that it is time to set out because the sea is calmest at this time of year.

Navigating only by the sun, the hero manages to bring his boat and his crew back home. His eldest wife has remained faithful to him even though people had already held his funeral potlatch. He gives gifts to everyone who has potlatched for him and gives each of the two clans, Ganaxtedi and Deshitan, a song as a gift. These songs remain the property of those Tlingit clans to the present day and are sung at ceremonial occasions.

The parallels to the Odyssey and to the Greek Odysseus and Penelope are quite striking in this story, suggesting universal popularity of such a theme.

The First Time They Know K'och'en"

A boy is getting meat for his grandmother when he has a vision and hears a voice which instructs him to fast, and leaves him a sack full of special food. He returns to his grandmother, calls his people together, and then directs them in a ritual, all the time predicting the coming of K'och'en or Whiteman, and passing out the strange (Whiteman) food. In the end, he leaves his grandmother a sack which will always be full of food, and he disappears.

This follows the familiar theme of separation in which the boy is alone in the woods, 'initiation' when he receives instruction from the strange voice, and 'return' where he instructs people what to do and predicts the coming of Whiteman.

It is like the story of Good Luck Lady in that it links historical events with mythical time and establishes a bridge between them.

The boy has had a shamanistic vision, demonstrated in his ability to predict the future and in his departure from the group after he has shared his new knowledge with them. There are a number of other Yukon stories of shamans who predicted the coming of whites.

This narrator focuses on the close relationship between the boy and his grandmother, comparing it with her own relationship with her grandson. Again, her version is an example of how individual narrators can adapt stories to reflect their own personal situations. Such flexibility gives individual story-tellers real scope for their talents.

The Boy In The Moon"

This is a very abbreviated version of a longer story. One version was recorded by Mrs. Effie Linklater of Old Crow;[45] another was recorded in southern Yukon.[46]

At one level, it may represent a failure to return to the group. In this case, the boy can still be seen in the moon — a visible reminder of his journey.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

Myth
A traditional story which takes place in supernatural time when men, animals, superhuman beings and often gods could communicate directly.

Legend
A traditional story associated with a specific period or event in history or with the exploits of particular historical characters.

Folktale
A traditional tale in which the primary interest is entertainment. It is not usually concerned with serious subjects or with deep problems; its main appeal is narrative.

Fable
A fable is a story designed to teach a specific lesson or moral.

Archetype
A term used extensively by psychologist Carl Jung to describe universal symbols which he says are inherited in the unconscious mind of mankind. He calls these archetypes 'mythological symbols' and his term is frequently used in discussions of mythology.

Mythological Time
The supernatural time before history in which myths occurred.

Paleolithic
Having to do with the earlier part of the stone age when men lived exclusively by hunting.

Neolithic
The age marking the appearance of settled agriculture and corresponding social development.

Shaman
Among hunting peoples, the shaman was the traditional healer, whose power derived from a relationship with a spirit helper.

Athapaskan
A generic term encompassing a family of related languages spoken in Alaska and northwestern Canada (as well as Navaho and Apache in the American southwest).

Kutchin
(Pr. Gwich'in), an Athapaskan language spoken in the northern Yukon Territory at Old Crow and also in parts of the Northwest Territories and Alaska. The language is also known by the French word 'Loucheux'.

Kaska
An Athapaskan language spoken in southeastern Yukon and in northern British Columbia, especially at Upper Liard, Watson Lake and Ross River in the Yukon and Lower Post in British Columbia.

Han
An Athapaskan language traditionally spoken near present-day Dawson City and at Eagle in Alaska.

Tutchone
An Athapaskan language spoken in central and southern Yukon.

Tlingit
A tribe of people living on the North Pacific coast (southeastern Alaska). Tlingit people also live in the southern Yukon at Carcross and at Teslin, and at Atlin in British Columbia. The Tlingit language is distinctively different from Athapaskan languages spoken elsewhere in the Yukon.

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